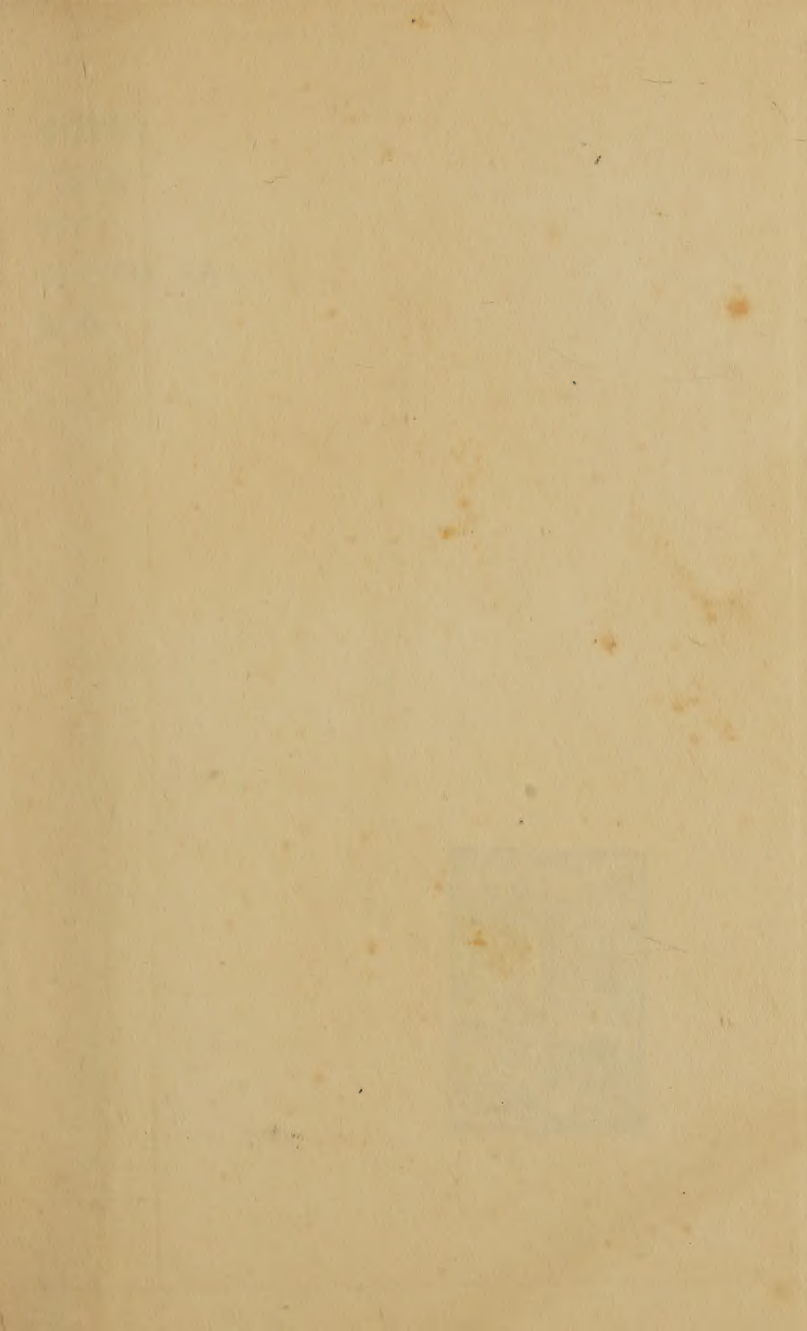




NOTES FROM MY  
SOUTH SEA LOG

LOUIS BECKE









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FROM  
MY  
SOUTH SEA  
LOG



*By LOUIS BECKE*

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LOUIS BECKE

*THIRD IMPRESSION*

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## NOTES FROM MY SOUTH SEA LOG

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The *Times* says:—"In the Pacific, among the islands, or at sea in strange schooners, or loafing in the slums of the ports, one meets, as one meets nowhere else, the waif and the outlaw. There is romance in the Pacific, in every ship and island. A man cannot rest a moment at a tavern table in any Pacific port, without meeting someone from the seas, whose eyes are yet bright with strange adventure. The spirit of the Pacific was in Robert Louis Stevenson, but perhaps no man has brought that disreputable ocean more closely home to English readers than Mr Louis Becke. His *Notes from my South Sea Log* consists of short stories, sketches, occasional memories, gleaned from the log-books kept by Mr Becke when he sailed those waters many years ago. In writing down his memories he has kept strictly to the telling of his tale. He has refrained from any of the fine writing, or description, for which his tales provide so admirable an opportunity. He does not paint, but suggests his backgrounds, and this so cleverly that the reader has ever the illusion of being near surf and sunny coral. We would not care to say which of these stories is the best, for so many are very good; but perhaps his art is most delicate in the story 'Bay o' Fundy Days' with which the book begins. It describes the author's boyhood on a part of the Australian coast, where a lad might grope upon a reef for aliotis shells when the tide was unusually low. As a description of jolly boyhood it will rank with any of Mr Kenneth Grahame's sketches; but with this difference—Mr Kenneth Grahame's immortals only dream of what Mr Becke actually did. One great merit of these stories is that they are, in the best sense, historical. The South Sea Islands have changed very greatly in the last thirty or forty years. The missionaries and steamships (and the leprosy and smallpox) have made them very different from what they were. Mr Becke paints them for us as they were of old. He shows us the natives not quite converted and the seas not quite policed, and the wastrels wandering from isle to atoll. Even more clearly does he show us himself, the supremely happy man, sitting in a little boat, in the bluest of blue water, pulling up wonderful fishes from the green sea pools. His book must be placed with *Typee* and *Omoo*, and the *Island Nights' Entertainments* as one of the guide-books to the isles of bliss."



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NOTES  
FROM  
MY SOUTH SEA LOG

“BAY O’ FUNDY DAYS”

I

THE schoolroom in which we were taught our lessons overlooked the sea, for the old house stood high on the summit of a great, grassy bluff, which seemed to spring from out the grey monotony of the Australian bush and thrust itself into the blue bosom of the sunlit Pacific. Forty years before, when the colony was young, and ten years before Queen Victoria came to the throne, the house on the bluff had been built by convict hands as a residence for the military governor of the settlement and his family, and now, after nearly half a century, it was about the only substantial remaining building of any size in the decayed, broken-hearted little township, with the exception of the great red brick church with its squat tower and the ruinous barracks. But grey, grim and gaunt as it was, with its weather-beaten walls stained deeply with the salty spume of the sea, and its old-fashioned windows—mostly blindless—staring pathetically out upon the ocean, the place was to us boys a palace of joy, and the long, long lines of curving beach and wooded bay and rocky cape and headland were still dearer to our hearts, and were with us in our dreams when, at times,

the savage "black north-easters" darkened the deep blue of ocean into a dull inky shade, and the leaping spray shot high up in air, and fell in drenching showers on the sea face of the bluff as the crested legions of the sea thundered and broke at its base.

The township (the apathetic survival of the vigorous "settlement") was three miles away, and there was no inhabited dwelling between it and the house on the bluff, except the lighthouse on Stark Point, though there were the ruins of many, many stone cottages all along the old Government road running near to the verge of the cliffs—cottages which had been built and had been tenanted by people in the far back black days of the chain gang and the lash, and to which, when the settlement went to decay, kindly Nature had stretched out her loving hand. Slowly but surely, year by year, the wild honeysuckle and convolvulus, and other native vines and creepers, enveloped the walls, and then the dense jungle of the coastal scrub followed, and one by one these relics of a dreadful time were swallowed up in the "bush" and only their verdure-hidden stones remained to tell of the sorrowful days of the past—Nature had covered up everything with a living, loving green.

Our tutor was to us one of the most wonderful and heroic men in the world, for he had been through the first Maori War, and had been wounded in one of Colonel Despard's mad attempts to storm the famous *pah* at Ohaeawae, when the British soldiers and sailors were sent to slaughter time after time by their impetuous and foolish commander who, madly impatient that no breach had been made by his poor little six-pounder guns, ordered assault after assault upon an almost impregnable position. The naval contingent who aided the soldiers were, curiously enough, looked upon with great favour by the defenders of the *pah*,



although they were first in Despard's storming parties, and their uniforms often ensured their lives being spared when any of them were captured, though the red-coated soldiers who were made prisoners were slaughtered with the most relentless savagery. Poor Guy—such was our tutor's name—was a junior lieutenant, and had twice led a company of gallant blue-jackets to the assault, only to be defeated. On the third occasion, as he and his sailors were trying to force an entrance into the *pah*, two of the stockade posts were suddenly removed by the Maori defenders, and Guy and two blue-jackets were seized by some of them, and dragged inside.

"You are a great *toa*"\* said a chief named Te Atua Wera to Guy, "but although we in the *pah* know that you sailor-men wish to avenge the victory we gained over you at Kororareka, we cannot let such brave men as you be a danger to us, else the land for which we fight will become lost to us, and the *pakeha*† will rule, and I, Te Atua Wera, may become a slave. Now if you will do as I wish I shall let you and these two men go away, but you must lead no more assaults, and when you get back to the mad chief of the soldiers you must tell him that we are very strong men here, and that his cannons are foolish things. They are too small to make a breach in this *pah*, and we are men who do not fear to die. His cannons are very little and very foolish, but they are not so foolish and little as he."

Then the chief, taking up one of the captured seamen's cutlasses which was heavier than Guy's sword, felt its edge and then fixed his keen eyes on the young officer's face.

"I shall not harm these two men of yours," he said slowly, "they shall go back safely to your lines if——" He paused, and a grim smile distorted his tattooed face.

\* Warrior.

† Foreigner.

"If what?" asked Guy calmly.

"If you will stretch out your right hand so that I may cut it off at the wrist, swiftly, no further harm shall come to you, and you too shall go free."

"Will you keep your word?"

"Aye, I, Te Atua Wera, am no liar."

Guy nodded, quietly took off his coat, and held out his left hand.

"Strike," he said.

The chief again smiled. "Thou art as cunning as thou art brave. I said the *right* hand."

Guy let fall his left and extended his right arm. Te Atua Wera stepped back a pace, raised the cutlass—and struck the point of it into the ground. Then he bent forward and gravely rubbed noses with Guy.

"Go," he said, "but come back no more." And Guy and the two sailors were allowed to return to Despard's lines unharmed.

It was winter, and although the climate of Northern New Zealand is mild, the troops suffered considerable hardships, and poor Guy almost succumbed to a severe pulmonary attack and had to be invalided out of the service. He was ill for a long time in New Zealand, but refused to return to England, for he had but few friends there, and thought he might get employment in the Colonial mercantile marine. But he failed to do so.

Twelve months afterwards he found himself in Sydney vainly endeavouring to obtain employment, and a casual meeting with my father resulted in his being engaged as our tutor at a salary of £50 a year. We went to meet him at the wharf, and the moment we saw him standing on the little steamer's paddle-box, waving his hand to us, we knew we should like him. And in less than six months he had gained not only the respect and esteem, but the affection of everyone in the big lonely house—from my father and

mother, down to little Toby, the sooty-hued ten-year-old son of "Duke," our aboriginal stockman.

Our lessons began at nine in the morning, and lasted until noon, the rest of the day and night we had to ourselves—my father being very much averse to over-study. Yet, lazy as we were, we made some progress, for Guy was a highly-educated and well-travelled man, a proficient linguist, and a good navigator. Then, too, he gave us practical instruction in seamanship by taking us on short cruises along the coast in a small ketch of 60 tons, owned by my father and a Major Ross. She was occasionally employed in carrying stores between Sydney and the little township, and was, though very old, a remarkably fast vessel. On one occasion the vessel was chartered by the Government to carry the mail to Lord Howe's Island, four hundred miles to the eastward, and returned with a cargo of onions to Brisbane, where Guy sold them on behalf of my father and Major Ross at a very satisfactory figure, the market at the time being denuded of the odorous vegetable, and the Lord Howe's Island onions were always in great request in Australia. On this voyage the ketch's complement consisted of Guy (in command), Lewis, the Shetlander mate, one A.B. and my two brothers, "Toby," and myself, who were "ordinary seamen" and cooks—each of us taking a day in the galley in turn. It was a delightful voyage. Every morning Guy would give us an hour's lesson in navigation, then followed knotting and splicing, and oh, greatest joy of all, caulking, for the ketch's decks leaked, and in the course of a week we had caulked her from end to end. I think, however, we enjoyed doing cook's work best of all, and the quantity of food that was eaten on that trip was something astonishing, for it was in the month of June that we sailed, and the days, though bright with sunshine, were sharp and keen, and everyone on

board seemed to be abnormally hungry. We had amongst our provisions over a hundred fowls and ducks, which were put in the hold—the vessel was in ballast—four pigs and a two-year-old bull calf. The latter was my especial property, and I was taking it to Lord Howe's Island in the hope that I could sell it to one of the settlers there, for it was a well-bred animal. His name was "Jenkins" and he was the source of infinite amusement to everyone on board, for as soon as he got his sea legs, we took him out of his pen and let him roam around the deck. He had one great enemy—a cattle dog belonging to my brother Will, who delighted to seize the hairy tuft on the end of his tail, and then "back water" and let poor "Jenkins" race round and round the deck, bellowing with fury, and every now and then slewing round and trying to butt his tormentor.

We had on board an old six-pounder gun, and one day, when it was very calm and windless, Mr Guy said he would let us have some target practice with the ancient weapon, for which there were about twenty round shot. Our powder was blasting powder—a bag of which weighing 25 lbs. had been given to us by a quarry proprietor in return for our having recovered two of his horses, which had strayed up into the ranges—for priming we had a flask of ordinary treble F. powder.

The gun, though so old, was in good order, and under Guy's supervision we soon had it loaded and ready for firing. Meanwhile an empty barrel had been dropped overboard and allowed to drift away to a distance of three hundred yards or so. Old Lewis sighted the gun and then the red-hot galley poker was applied to the vent. With a flash and roar off she went, and to our delight the ball struck the water about two feet in front of the cask, then ricocheted two or three times on the other side of it.



Now, at this time poor "Jenkins" had been, with closed eyes, lying down aft on the little monkey poop, contentedly chewing his cud, but the astounding report of the gun so terrified him that, with a snort of terror, he sprang to his feet, and made a rush for'ard, but the main hatch being open the unfortunate animal went headlong down, broke a leg, and so seriously injured one of the pigs on top of which he fell, that we had to kill both animals, and so discontinued our target practice for butchering operations.

After we had been out for nearly a week we sighted the island and the remarkable peak called Ball's Pyramid—a curious rocky cone about 4000 feet high. We passed within a mile of it, and then the wind died away, and as we were on soundings, Mr Guy anchored for the night in 25 fathoms, for he was afraid of the current setting us on to the Pyramid. We had on board with us an ample supply of splendid deep-sea fishing tackle, and no sooner had we made everything snug, than we baited our small lines with pieces of poor "Jenkins," and before my line had got half-way to the bottom, the bait was seized by an eight-pounder yellow-tail, which I succeeded in getting on deck safely.

"Hurrah," cried the mate, "there's bait enough for us all now. Haul in those small lines, boys, and get out your best and strongest, and you'll see the sort of fish there are at Lord Howe's." (He knew the place well.)

But each of my brothers had hooked a fish—one a yellow-tail as large as mine, and the other a fine sea-bream weighing quite 5 lbs. He was a beautiful fish, and, being no use for bait, was thrown to Toby to scale and clean for supper.

Then we set to work with our big lines, baiting the thick 4-in. hooks with strips of yellow-tail, and then we had the most glorious fishing imaginable. The

water seemed to be alive with yellow-tail, red schnapper, jew-fish, and sea-bream, and in less than a quarter of an hour there were several score of all sorts kicking and jumping about on the deck. So plentiful were they that we could see them only a few fathoms down, so instead of lowering to the bottom, we cut off our heavy lead sinkers (as the hook and bait were weight enough) and used only about six fathoms of line instead of five-and-twenty. Every time one of us hooked a fish and hauled it to the surface, it would be followed to the top by hundreds and hundreds of others all equally ravenous. Some of the yellow-tail were of such size that we had to strike the grains into them to lift them on board, low as was our little vessel's freeboard. One that old Lewis caught weighed 92 lbs., and another 71 lbs., whilst the schnappers—the most prized of all Australian fish—were so large—10 lbs. to 15 lbs.—that it was quite exhausting work getting them over the side. Two hours passed away so quickly that we were surprised to see the sun low down on the western horizon, and then Mr Guy cried "Enough, boys, I'm too tired to lift another fish. Knock off now for supper, and we'll go at it again if you like after we have eaten something."

By this time the main deck was literally covered with beautiful fish, and my hands were cut and bleeding, for my line, though very strong, was altogether too thin for a 15-lb. or even 10-lb. schnapper—a fish which for its size is the most powerful of which I know.

After supper—boiled fish and potatoes and tea—we again began, but as it was now dark, we caught no more yellow-tail or schnapper, but the mate told us to lower to the bottom, as we should be sure to get flat-head. He was quite right, for in an hour we caught

a dozen of these delicious fish. Then we knocked off entirely, and after the usual drink of tea, set to work to clean such of the fish as we wanted, leaving the others for the settlers on the island.

At daylight we got under way, and a few hours later had again dropped anchor on the S.W. side of the island, near the settlement. The inhabitants, of whom there were about 100, treated us most hospitably, and, indeed, were delighted to see us. Mr Guy took us on shore, and we each went to a different family. My host was an old ex-Hobart Town whaling skipper with a numerous family of stalwart sons and pleasant-faced daughters. He had settled on the island twenty years previously, and was full of its praises, and said that, though he was not making a fortune, he was doing quite well enough, and would never leave the place. And I did not wonder at his resolution, for I thought it a beautiful spot—lovely scenery, a good climate, no fever, and a paradise for a boy fond of fishing, shooting and mountain climbing, and botany.

We remained on shore a week, for good-natured Mr Guy said he wanted us to enjoy ourselves all we could. The inhabitants would not let anyone belonging to the ketch do any work—they insisted not only in loading the vessel from their own boats, but also stowed the cargo. Nearly all the older male inhabitants were Americans or Englishmen, and had been either masters or mates of whaleships, and had settled down in this lonely spot to become farmers, though in the "season" they did shore-whaling. The whales (mostly "hump-backs") were of course "cut-in" and "tried-out" on the shore, and the oil shipped to Sydney once a year, and during our stay there I simply "soaked in" all the information I could get about whaling, for the subject fascinated me; and, some years later, when I made my first four months' cruise in a New Bedford sperm

whaler, the theoretical knowledge I had gained on Lord Howe's Island proved very useful to me—it at least served to prevent my being called a "greenhorn."

The young people on the island I liked very much. They were rough and uneducated, but honest, good-natured and very venturesome. We had one Sunday service on shore; it was held in the open air under a huge fig tree, and Mr Guy, who was the "minister" by request, read the service and then talked—not preached to the congregation—for about half-an-hour.

When he had finished, an American named Jim Leigh, who had been a mate of a whaler, made everyone smile by rising up and saying—

"Go on, boss. Give us some more."

## II

On our return home from this cruise we had to make up for lost time by working harder, for my father, though very lenient to us as a rule, told Mr Guy to make us toe the mark, and not let us think that cruising about and shooting and fishing were the be-all and end-all of existence. But we were all too fond of our tutor, as well as of our father, to cause either of them any disappointment, and went to work with a zest, and the remaining winter months passed by pretty quickly. We were all early risers in the house on the bluff, winter and summer, and we had to do men's work. For instance, every week or ten days a bullock had to be killed, and we had to first round up a mob of cattle, perhaps twenty miles away from home, pick out the particular beast we wanted, and drive it and a few cows and calves (to keep it company) home. This was work which we always enjoyed, for it often meant that we had to camp out for a night or two among the



ranges, or on the margin of some swamp or lagoon, where we could be sure of good duck-shooting. In those days breech-loading guns were unknown—at least I never saw one in that part of Australia—and we used either single or double-barrelled muzzle-loaders, and made very good shooting with them too.

Duke, the black stockman, who was always sent in charge, was not only a great shot, but a wonderfully clever trapper as well, and we learnt much from him. He showed us how to catch black duck and wood duck by burying lines under the sand on the margin of a lagoon, or out on a sandbank, and baiting small hooks with little green fish about an inch long, and making the ends of the lines fast to a stone or stake; and how to get fresh-water fish out of rather big waterholes by kneading ripe wild apples into a pulp, and throwing lumps of the rich purple stuff into the water, and then so disturbing it that the fish became stupefied and came to the surface.

Sometimes Mr Guy would come with us. He was not only a good rider, but, like most sailors, a daring one; and then, too, he loved the bush as much as he loved the sea, and was especially fond of visiting any aboriginal camps we came across, and talking to these poor savages, for whom he had an intense pity. Duke had a great respect for him, because he, in the course of five years, had learnt to "yabba"\* quite fluently to the blacks in their own language.

On these bullock-getting trips we generally took with us to carry our blankets, guns, and provisions, a knowing old packhorse called "Paddy," who always jogged on ahead of us. He had formerly belonged to Major Ross, who was a man very fond of shooting, and whenever we were riding through open grass country, and Paddy came to a dead stop and turned his head and

\* Speak.

looked at us, we knew that a wild turkey was near, that Paddy had seen it, and expected us to shoot. I have seen him stop quite twenty times in a few hours, and, although we had shot all the turkeys we wanted, he would become very dissatisfied and sulky if we did not fire at every one he saw. These birds are very difficult to get within range if anyone is on foot, but on horseback one can ride up to within a few yards of them before they rise.

Once we had found the mob of cattle for which we were seeking, we would round them up on the nearest cattle camp and cut out half-a-dozen head, including the particular beast we wanted to kill. We sometimes would come across "cleanskins," *i.e.*, unbranded beasts, which we knew belonged to either my father or a neighbouring squatter, whose station was a hundred miles distant, and these we used every endeavour to drive home, where they were branded, some with our own brand, and some with that of our neighbour, who observed the same practice with "cleanskins" found on his own run. This was a very satisfactory and amicable arrangement. Mr James Thorburn knew that he could trust my father, and my father knew that he could trust him. On such occasions my father would write to Mr Thorburn in this manner: "Dear Jim, Duke has brought in four of your cleanskins from Stony River, two two-year-old roan heifers, a black bull calf, and a red and white steer. Have branded them J over T."

Ah, those good old days, those bright, bright days of happy youth, when bush and beach and sea and sky talked to our boyish hearts, and made us feel it was joy to live, and work, and sleep, and rise eager for another day.

Well, we would get our doomed bullock home—sometimes the "bullock" was a fat cow—and Duke,

seated on the topmost rail of the killing yard with a Terry rifle in his hand, would drop the poor beast with a bullet through its brain. And then my father, pipe in mouth, silent but observant, would watch us boys and Duke hoist the carcass on the rude windmill "gallows" and see us skin and clean it. Then we had to peg out the hide in one of the yards, cover it with wood ashes, wash ourselves, and go to the house.

Father would be at his table in his combined study, office and storeroom, pencil<sup>s</sup> in hand.

"Nice beast, boys?"

"Yes, sir."

"What weight, about?"

"Seven hundred, sir."

"Too little. You will have to get another tomorrow. Why didn't you get that big brindled bullock on Bangalow camp?"

"Could not find him, sir."

"Duck-shooting, I suppose?"

No answer, but considerable shuffling of feet.

"Well, get some supper and turn in. I want you to cut up one hind quarter of that beast for use here, and salt the rest. Send a piece of about twenty pounds to the lighthouse, and six each of five pounds to the pilot boat's people."

The lighthouse keeper had a huge family, whom he tried to support on a salary of £9 a month, and the six members of the pilot boat's crew had numerous olive branches. My father never missed sending them some beef every two or three weeks. He had done so for many years, and I daresay they were grateful, but if he had suddenly discontinued the practice no doubt they would have felt aggrieved. In those days cattle were cheap, and thousands were sent to the boiling-down works for their tallow.

At daylight in the morning, we would rise and carry

the carcase from the gallows from where it was suspended to a shed, where we would cut it up, salt all that portion that was not required for immediate use, stack it on slatted shelves to drain, clean up the shed, and then with Mr Guy, Duke and Toby, go for our morning bathe in the surf at the northern side of the bluff.

Duke, with his white, pearly teeth gleaming under his black-moustached lip, would throw himself into the surging rollers with a childish cry of delight, though he was a man of forty years of age or more, and diving underneath each cresting billow, emerge on the other side, shaking his dark locks, leaping hand over hand towards the next billow, as a startled seal leaps and dives and skims the surface of the water like a huge flying-fish.

Then, as old Pepys would say, "home to breakfast," a good substantial repast of yellow maize-meal porridge and fried fish, or grilled steaks with oysters from the mouth of the creek which debouched into the ocean on the northern side of the bluff. Our father certainly made us work, but he gave us all the food we wanted—and we wanted a good deal. As soon as breakfast was over we became Mr Guy's "bondmen" as he called us, and not even my father would venture into the school-room until the heavy old grandfather's clock at the foot of the stairs struck twelve.

There were, however, occasions when this rule was relaxed. This was on "Bay o' Fundy Days"—and "Bay o' Fundy Days" came perhaps eight or ten times in the year, and were eagerly looked forward to weeks beforehand, and due preparations made, for not only was it a day of delight, but also one of profit, as I shall presently explain.

The lighthouse keeper, who was a native of Nova Scotia and an old sailor, had told us of the wonderful tides in the Bay of Fundy, where there is a rise and

fall of 70 feet; and so whenever there was an especially low tide and a reef which was two miles away from the bluff showed high and dry, we called it a "Bay o' Fundy" day, and were given a holiday to fish and explore the reef for *aliothis* shells, a beautiful univalve which we called "Illiokus," much to Guy's amusement. These shells we used to clean externally with muriatic acid, until they became as wonderfully and as beautifully iridescent as the pearly interior. When cleaned we sent them to Sydney, where a curio dealer gave us 4/- to 5/- a pair for shells as large as a saucer, and 2/- to 2/6 a pair for the smaller ones. But the exciting part of the work of getting *aliothis* shells (I don't know even now if it is *aliothis* or *haliothis*) was the knowledge that in the very old and "humpybacked" ones we could always be sure of finding from one to half-a-dozen small pearls of such a beautiful lustre that the curio dealer would always give us 5/-, and sometimes as much as 10/-, each for them. I have no doubt they were worth a great deal more, but as we did not know their real value, we were quite content. The very small seed pearls we used to keep until we had a match-box full, and then we were paid so much per ounce—I think it was £3. (Speaking of match-boxes reminds me of the antiquated style of matches in those early days; they were made of wood, rounded, and tipped with a compound, which, when ignited, emitted streams of atrociously-smelling smoke. Each box of 100 matches were enclosed in either a scarlet or green paper box, on which was a flaming picture of the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava.)

We discovered the value of these *aliothis*—locally called "mutton-fish"—through a Chinaman named Ah Yam, who, with a fellow-countryman, was living at the mouth of a lagoon about ten miles away from the house on the bluff. They were fishermen, and caught and



smoked great numbers of mullet and whiting, which they sent to Sydney every month or so. One day we noticed them carrying up a large basket filled with mutton-fish, and Ah Yam informed us that they extracted the "fish" from the shell and put them in a brine pickle for a few days; after that they were dried in the sun, and packed in cases or casks, and sent to Sydney, where they were much relished by the Chinese community. The beautiful shells they regarded as of no value, and after this occasion always let us take them away.

One day poor Ah Yam had the misfortune to have his right leg broken. He was felling an ironbark tree, and one of the branches caught him as he was running from under it. The bone was badly shattered, and for over three months he was unable to get about. My mother took good care of him and visited him frequently, for the doctor who had set the limb lived forty miles away and only came to see him twice or three times at long intervals. When he had recovered, his gratitude was unbounded, and he and his countryman insisted upon bringing us fish, crayfish and vegetables two or three times a week. My mother always accepted them, for although we caught all the fish required, and our own garden was amply stocked with vegetables, the two Chinamen would have been hurt if we had not taken their gifts.

One Sunday afternoon—about six months after his leg had been broken—Ah Yam called to see us, and, somewhat to our astonishment, asked to speak to my father and mother in private. He was taken into my father's office, and remained there talking to our parents for quite half-an-hour. Then my mother called us in.

"Boys," she said, "you will all be very sorry to hear that Ah Yam and his mate are going home to China,

and after next Thursday we shall see them no more. Now, Ah Yam has brought me a very, very beautiful present——"

"No, no, missee, not welly beautiful," protested Ah Yam smilingly, "but I want to show you, missee, that I like you all welly much, and I welly solly to go home China, and see you no more. Ah, you all welly kind—boy, girl, Mr Guy, all people in your house kind to Ah Yam and Gee Toy."

My father, black-bearded, rough and stern, put his huge leg-of-mutton fist on the Chinaman's shoulder.

"The boys all like you, Ah Yam, and I am sorry you are going away. And I am glad to hear that you have done so well"; then turning to my mother, he said: "Show the boys your present, mother."

My mother opened her hand, and showed us nine really beautiful pearls, each one the size of a small pea.

"Boys, these pearls are from *aliothii* shells, and Ah Yam has been telling us a secret—a secret that will be of great value, for now you boys can make quite a nice little sum of money, whenever there is a 'Bay o' Fundy day,'" and our mother smiled, for we were none too prosperous in those days, when cattle were sold to the boiling-down places—and our family was a large one.

Then Ah Yam told us that when we went to collect *aliothii* shells, we should always look for those which presented the appearance of age, were deformed in shape, and covered with a coral growth, and that we could always count upon finding pearls in a curious appendix to the intestines. Sometimes the pearls—if of unusual size—would be encrusted on to the inner side of the shell itself, but generally they would be found loose in the appendix.

And then to our astonishment we learned that he and Gee Toy had received no less than two hundred and seventy pounds from the Chinese company in

Sydney for the pearls they had found during a period of three years.

After that, as I have said, a "Bay o' Fundy day" was always a profitable one to us, and we would run great risks in diving underneath the reef, and prizing off the great univalves with our blunt chisels; for, under the dark overhanging ledges the oldest shells were to be found, and many a time we would come to the surface with cut heads and hands, and our bodies bleeding from contact with the jagged coral. But we took little heed of such things in those days.

On one occasion, just as we were returning home from one of the excursions, we met two blacks, descending the bluff to the beach. They were big stalwart fellows, and each carried three or four very long and beautifully made spears. They stopped and chatted with us awhile, and then asked us to come and see them spear "big feller jew-fish." Of course we were only too glad, and retraced our steps until we came to a peculiar cluster of rocks which formed one side of a deep little bay, the bottom of which was of pure white sand interspersed with a few round boulders of a bluish-grey colour. The summit of the rocks was about sixty feet above the water, and were covered with coarse grass, and an esculent saline plant called "pig-face." Our black friends led the way to the top, and then they scanned the water intently. Presently one of them, named Yarra, uttered an exclamation of satisfaction, and pointed towards the beach end of the bay, and there, in quite shallow water, we saw two noble specimens of jew-fish lazily swimming to and fro on the lookout for mullet. Each was over five feet in length, and their beautiful bodies gleamed like polished silver as they now and then rolled to the motion of the slight swell which was lazily coming up the little bay.

"Look down here, too," said Yarra's mate, who possessed the magnificent English name of "Lord Howard," and he pointed to the centre of the bay, and we saw the indistinct form of many scores of jew-fish, some large, some small.

Now, to my certain knowledge, we had visited that bay at least twice a week for six months past to fish for sea-bream, which were very plentiful, but never had we seen more than one or two jew-fish there, and those only small ones—half the size of a full grown salmon. We asked Yarra how it was that he and his mate knew they would find so many here at this particular time, and he told us that as soon as the young sea-mullet left the spawning grounds on the various rivers and creeks for the sea, they were always followed by the jew-fish, which chased them into the bays, or into deep pools, and that it was now the third day since the mullet had come out on the bar. Here was another bit of knowledge for us!

Bidding us keep quiet, the two black fellows divested themselves of their ragged pants, and crept down the rocks till they were within thirty feet of the two big fish, and then, rising erect, they threw their spears simultaneously, and with so true an aim, that both of the "jews" were transfixed through their bodies by the long, slender spears. It was so beautifully done that we could not resist shouting out "Hurrah!" as our two sable friends leapt into the water, and each of them seized a fish by thrusting a hand through the gills, and dragged it ashore on to the firm, hard sand.

We got down from the rocks, and ran over to have a close inspection, and whilst we were each in turn trying to lift the heavier of the two fish, our black friends were joined by their gins\* and piccaninnies, who were camped somewhere up the creek. We

\* Wives.

walked there with them, as Yarra insisted upon giving us a piece of fish weighing about 20 lbs. to take home, and told one of the gins to hurry and make a cane basket in which to carry it.

We frequently met parties of these aboriginals fishing on the coast and in the rivers, and, in their way, they were always very hospitable to us. For Mr Guy, as I have said, they always showed a great respect, and one day a number of them came to the house, and presented him with a large bundle of beautifully cured skins of the duck-billed platypus—a really valuable gift. We boys were, of course, all well known to all the blacks for quite fifty miles north and south from the settlement, and they always addressed us by our Christian names. Every Queen's birthday they gathered into a camp just outside the township to receive the annual dole of one Government blanket each for an adult, and one for every two piccaninnies. All these blankets were branded in the centre with a crown and the letters V.R., and there was a penalty of £5 attached for their being found in the possession of any white person; but the poor blacks would often sell them for a shilling or two to unscrupulous settlers, who would cut them across, remove the Crown marks, and then sew the halves together again.

Ours was indeed a happy boyhood, and our greatest sorrow was when one day there came a letter for our tutor, informing him that a small estate had been bequeathed to him by a brother in England. He went home with the intention of realising upon the property, and returning to Australia, but succumbed to an illness contracted in the Red Sea. But we have never forgotten him.



## THE POOL THE "GREENBACKS" HAUNT

JUST where the river broadens out into the open bar with its serried lines of creamy breakers stretching two long miles from point to point, there is a deep sandy pool within a stone's-throw of the hard, white beach. It was formed twenty years ago by what you take to be at first sight a low black rock covered with streaming kelp, which rises and falls to the tide with a slow heavy movement like the lifting of a funeral pall to the breeze. It is not a rock, but the iron hull of a coasting steamer, which took the ground on the current-swept bar one wild wintry day in June, and, capsized by a mighty roller, was washed in by successive seas to where she now lies, settled firmly in the sand. If the tide is low, you may, by skirting the pool, walk out to her, and look down into the dark, hollow hull, gutted of everything but the two Scotch boilers and the oyster-covered iron beams and girders. Try not to explore therein with naked feet and seize some of the hundreds of great crayfish you will see moving about, feeding upon the rich red and green seaweed growing to the steamer's inside plates, for there, too, lurks the savage octopus—sometimes with tentacles a full fathom in length, and strong enough to seriously injure or drown a man were he alone in that darkening spot. And, if you are in doubt as to their existence, lower a baited hook from one of the bent and twisted girders, and suspend it half-way to the bottom of the hold.

Out from the sea-weed covered sides, or up from the bottom itself, comes a thin wavering "thing," which curls itself around the bait, and gently but

swiftly draws it away into the darkness—into that devilish parrot-shaped bill and the hideous squirming body with its loathly tentacles of marbled grey and black, and the soft bulbous head with the cruel, grey-green eyes. If your line is very strong, and the hook stout enough to hold a 50-lb. fish, and you want to try the strength of this horror of the sea, wait a few seconds until the creature has fully enveloped the bait with its tentacles, and shapened itself into the form of a cottage loaf, then give a sharp jerk—and see what you can do! It may take you half-an-hour or more ere you can drag the creature away from whatever it may have attached itself, and lift it from the once clear water it has fouled and blackened by its inky discharges. Sometimes—so the aborigines say, if the octopus is not hooked through the centre part of its body, whence the cupping tentacles radiate, but through a single tentacle only—it will sever it with its beak. And I believe it; for I have seen an Australian native cat when one of its feet has been caught in a trap, turn, and deliberately gnaw off the end of the imprisoned limb, so as to free itself.

But let us leave the wreck, and return to the pool—the pool which the greenbacks haunt.

\* \* \* \*

The great sea-bream of the Australian eastern seaboard has many local names—"greenbacks," "greenies," "schnapper-bream," but on this part of the coast of which I write the noble fish is known as the "green-backed sea-bream." They run up to five pounds—sometimes eight pounds, and are of a very handsome appearance—a bold head, widely-forked tail tipped with yellow, and a shapely body, covered, except on the back, with large silvery scales; on the back they assume a green colour, varying in hue according to the

age and size of the fish. It is of shy habits, and does not often enter harbours or rivers, preferring the surf-disturbed waters along the beaches, especially at the bases of rocks, where the sand is continually kept in suspension by the action of either the current or the surf. If the sun is very bright, the sea calm, and water clear and undisturbed, they will seldom take a bait, no matter how tempting, but shoot out to sea the instant the line is cast. Strong grey silk twist was always my tackle, and a young mullet or gar-fish the bait.

\* \* \* \* \*

This particular pool was my favourite spot. It was unknown to anyone in the sleepy little town near the bar, and I had discovered it by accident when visiting the wreck in search of crayfish. From where I stood when fishing, there was a clear view of a mile along the beach towards the town, and whenever I saw anyone approaching me, I hurriedly wound up my line, and then, after removing as well as I could all traces of bait, fish scales, etc., I, like the Arabs in the poem, silently stole away, for I hated the idea of anyone else discovering that treasured and sacred pool. But one day it was found by the local schoolmaster, who imparted *his* secret to me—in confidence, I thought. Alas! he had told his numerous family of six boys and three girls, all ardent fisher-folk, and they boastfully "gave it away" to other people, and then the glory of that pool had departed—for me, at any rate—and a silent rage possessed my heart when one Saturday afternoon, as I stood on an overlooking bluff, I saw a mob of heathens, led by some sinful official without a soul who came from the New South Wales Marine Board steamer, sweeping it with a net! I say "some-one" only. After many years I have almost forgiven him, so will not further harrow my feelings by writing

his name, as by now he is probably dead and being punished.

No matter how stood the tide in those first glorious days, you could always get "greenbacks" there. If it was on the ebb, the discoloured current from the river mingled with the cloudy white sand as it rose in eddying volumes from the sides and centre; if on the flood, the swirling little foam-crested breakers that were "tailed-in" by the stern of the wrecked steamer gave the desired factor for success, and all one had to do was to flake out fifty or sixty yards of line on the hard beach, bait the two stout 2-in. Kirbys with a mullet, gar or piece of octopus, and then cast. And then almost before the 2-oz. sinker touched the bottom, and you had time to take a turn of the line around the palm of your hand, it tautened out like a piece of steel wire, and you felt that delightful, wonderful, enchanting thrill through your veins, known only to the true fisherman, as the fish began to fight for his life. He never wriggled and shook your hand except when he came to the end of the wild semi-circles he made, but kept on a steady strain, and the silk hummed and sent out tiny globules of water as an incoming wave wetted the near end of the tautened line. Ha, now you have him, head on, and haul in as quickly as your two hands can reach out and grasp the slender threads; and then comes a sudden tug, and you know that another fish is fast to the second hook, and is trying to run to starboard—as the first one now makes a dart to port. With two such strong fish on you cannot tolerate any divergence of courses, although you must put up with—and watch with delight—their gymnastics as their strong spiny lower fins touch the sand, and they make a last game struggle. Then, as you draw them into but a few inches of water, and they are fairly aground, you begin to properly feel

their weight as they cant over on their sides with angry, erect dorsal fins, and wildly flapping tails, shaking off the sand from their bodies of shining silver.

Ah, it is good to handle them at last, unhook and place them in the deep hole in the sand you have made, and cover them up, so as to prevent their beauties from being spoiled by the hot Australian sun—if it is summer-time, or the cold wind if it be winter.

Behind you, on the summit of the treeless, grassy bluff which overlooks the wreck and the sacred pool, you may, as you turn to make another cast, see some people of the town sitting on half-a-dozen square tombs, erected to the memory of officers and soldiers of the old convict days. They are—like the tombs—always there, as they have nothing to do but bask in the sunshine, and they wonder why you are fishing on the beach, when, about the wharves of the decaying little town two miles away, you could catch all the fish you wanted, especially if you went to the boiling-down works, where, when the tide was low, you would find them—mullet, whiting, flathead and garfish—packed together in the muddy depressions of the great sandbank stretching half-way across the harbour towards the North Sand Spit.



## “ NIGHT ”

FOR ten miles I had walked along a hard beach of grey sand without, to my joy, meeting a single person, and towards sunset I came to a creek which debouched into the Pacific between two low bluffs, covered with thick scrub, and here I decided to camp for the night, for the sun was behind the purpling range, and I was tired, very tired.

I had left the little seaport (twelve miles distant) soon after breakfast, determined to get away from it and its hideous Sunday—a Sunday there was always a horror to me, for I was suffering from malarial fever, and there was a church bell there that I regarded as a personal enemy. It was a noisy, clacking, clamorous monster of a thing, and began its torturing, brain-racking persecution at eight in the morning, and then had several other outbursts during the day. In the day-time its infernal din was bad enough—at night-time it was (to me at least) an agony and a curse.

And so on this Saturday morning I had left to escape it.

Putting my fishing lines, together with some pepper, salt, tea and sugar into my shooting bag, and carrying my billy can slung over my gun, I left the one hotel in the place, and walked through the scandalised street, over the downs beyond the town, and then descended to the beach, where I was greeted by the cool southerly breeze, the glint of the sun-lit sea and the quavering hum of the beating surf. How different from the hot, stuffy town, with its red, treeless streets,

shabby houses, and general air of indolent decay and unutterable dulness. I have often thought that that town only wanted a small cathedral, and a cathedral “set” to make it, *facile princeps*, the dullest and most God-forsaken hole on the whole Australian continent. It was built by convict hands in the days of the cruel System, and nothing but an earthquake or a big fire will ever improve it.

But once away from this squalid remnant of the old colonial times you are with Nature—with the forest of lofty gums and ironbarks, and clumps of graceful bangalow palms, with tiny, brawling streams and the sweet notes of birds, and the rustle of the swaying canopy of green overhead is answered by the call of the sea.

I had walked but leisurely along the beach, although I wanted to walk fast—the fever poison already was leaving my veins, and that strange haunting fear of meeting people, dying away. I loved these long, lonely tramps along the coast and through the silent bush, and, weak as I had been for a month past, had “footed” it from the Bellinger River to the Hastings—80 miles—stopping sometimes under a roof, but more often lying in the warm scrub under the shining stars.

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Lighting my camp fire in the midst of a clump of honeysuckles that stood on the side of the bluff, I quickly made my bed of coarse grass, walked a short distance up the creek bank, where the water was quite fresh, filled my billy can, and returned to cook my supper—one of two green-backed bream caught an hour before in the surf. In a few moments the fish was grilling on the glowing coals—and the billy beginning to sing; a strip of ti-tree bark made a fine,

clean plate for the fish and salt, and another for the bread, and appetite made a good sauce. Then, after that, a heavenly smoke.

Fifty yards from the foot of the bluff were the undulating creeper-covered dunes of soft sand denoting high-water mark; from there the beach shelved quickly to the water's edge—a glorious beach of smooth, hard sand, delightful to the naked foot now that the sun was gone. The tide was at full flood, the wind had died away, and only the gentlest, swishing ripples came in from the sea. Three miles out a small top-sail schooner lay becalmed. From the forest behind a mopoke gave cry, a 'possum or two squealed, and some mullet leapt out of the quiet waters at the mouth of the creek and fell back with a splashing noise. And then I heard a sudden rush of scurrying feet over the dry carpet of leaves and knew that an iguana was giving chase to some luckless bandicoot.

As I sat there and looked at the shimmering water beneath, there was a sudden commotion therein, and a swarm of small fry leapt out and dropped back again—some on the sand—in a shower of silver—they were being chased by several big “trevalli”—noble fish dear to the heart of the man who has once felt the singing hum of the line when a ten-pounder is at one end of it. But although I knew that I had but to bait my line and cast it, sinkerless, into the water to land one of the shining beauties on the sand, I did not want any more fish. In the bush at the back of the bluff were fat, bronze-winged pigeons and gill-birds, and on the morrow I should have game for my food. How the man who is recovering from fever gloats over the thought of what he is going to eat! It occupies his thoughts more than his hope of salvation.

But the beach called—and I went— just to lave my

feet in the water, and watch the shadowy phosphorescent outlines of the fish—the preyers and the preyed upon. And more and more of the myriad stars came out until sky and sea and sleeping mountain forest and shining beach made the world very beautiful and sweet, and the drifting schooner out beyond and myself were the only things to make a blot—a blot of human life—upon it.

Back to the camp, to sleep. And there I find company have arrived—a mare and foal.

\* \* \* \* \*

They are standing side by side near the fire, and, as I draw near, the long-legged, woolly-tailed offspring sidles closer up to his mother, who lifts her head and gives a whinnying, inquiring snort as I stroke her nose.

"Man," she says, "who are you? I am a lame old stock mare, turned out to shift for myself. And my son and I saw your camp fire, and came to see who you were."

And then because I gave her half a loaf of bread, she and woolly-tail stayed with me till the morn, when the southerly came to life, and the surf began to thunder once more.

## THE GOOD OLD TIMES

(FROM A MICRONESIAN POINT OF VIEW)

Sru, the One-Eyed, was pounding the White Man a drink of green kava in a hollowed stone for a mortar, using for a pestle a short, heavy piece of *toa* wood. Beside him, holding a gourd of water, was his niece Sipi, a quiet, sad-faced "woman" of seventeen, the mother of twins. Sru, hardened, shameless, and unconverted, had but a ragged mat wrapped around his tattooed loins, and smoked a stumpy clay pipe; Sipi, as became a communicant and the mother of children, was clothed in a gown, and her long, jet black locks were plaited *a la Suisse*, which the missionaries allowed. But her delicate little nostrils were twitching, as now and again the delicious smoke from the pipe of Uncle Sru was wafted across her pretty Semitic nose. Far below the harbour of Jakoits lay as a lake of molten silver under the last rays of the sun, and above the branches of the plumed coco-palms hung hot, limp and motionless, awaiting the evening breeze.

Suddenly there came the rasping clamour of the mission bell, and Sipi moved uneasily and looked appealingly at the White Man.

"There be a fine of one dollar if I be not in my place at church," she half-whispered.

Old Sru turned upon her fiercely. "Sit thee quiet, little fool. What is a dollar! Something for the crawling worm, the sexless, shrunken-chested pig and son of a pig of a Nānu the teacher; he who, because



he weareth a white shirt and a black tie, and carrieth about a Bible that weigheth as much as this stone kava bowl, thinketh he is someone great! May he die and go to that pit of everlasting fire to which he has condemned me, because I, being a man, smote him in the face and sent many of his teeth down into his stomach when he had me fined for mending my nets upon a Sunday. What is Sunday? Who is Nānu? What is Miriamu, his wife? How comes it that when white men come to his house the godly Nānu goeth away for a time 'to see a sick man'?" and the old fellow grinned sardonically as he dealt the kava root another blow. "Always is there a sick man to visit when a stranger with money in his pockets comes to Nānu's house—never a sick woman whom Miriamu should hasten to visit. Ah, the pious Miriamu! She stayeth in the house with the white visitor—to pray," and he chuckled. "More water, child. Trouble not about the dollar."

"Aye," said the White Man, "I will give thee the dollar for the fine, Sipi."

"Ha, child, see that! This, our friend, is as one of the white men of the old times—the good, brave times. Thou art a widow and landless, and only I, old Sru, with the *mata punie*\* am left to thee to find food for thee and thy brats. Thy husband was a fool. Did not our good friend here warn him that it was an ill thing for a man of Ponapé to wear heavy clothes once a week, and then wear but a girdle for the other six days. And he being a fool, and in terror of the white missionary—who is but another money-eater like Nānu—took no heed, and died of the cough and the rotting away of the chest, as two hundred other men have died in Ponapé! And to pay the American missionary thirty silver dollars for the clothes, he sold his land to

\* One eye.

the German trader Schwartz. Did not Schwartz tell him he was a fool?"

"Aye," replied the meek Sipi, as she handed the White Man a coconut cup full to the brim of strong green kava, "but yet had he to dress like a Christian, or be fined heavily."

Old Sru waited till the White Man had drunk, and then his niece filled the shell for her disreputable relative. He drained it off, smacked his lips, and then turned his surviving optic on his guest—the other had been lost by a spear thrust in the "good old times."

"How much, good friend, were the clothes of this foolish woman's dead husband worth in thy land of England, or in the land of Schwartz? Five dollars for the three garments, and two dollars for the shoes and the long black hat, shaped like a cannon! So said Schwartz. And the white missionary maketh every man pay thirty! May the cave-god Jijil seize him when he dies and grind his bones into paste! Ah, in the old times, when one man robbed another, there was blood atonement to be made; so, too, was there when a wife was unfaithful, or when a man trespassed on the land of another. Now, since we have become Christians it is a matter of money, and if a married woman is unchaste she payeth her dollar or two dollars to the missionary, and must not communicate for eight Sundays till she is purged of her offence. Is *that* any punishment? Didst ever hear of the white man Kapitan Tanielu,\* he who lies buried on the little island yonder, and how he had blood atonement for wrong. Ah, he was a great man—brave, good and generous to those he loved, and a terror to those he did not like. There are few white men like him now. A great man—a truly great man!"

"Tell me," said the White Man. "But first let Sipi

\* Captain Daniels.

smoke, thou thoughtless old fellow. Hast no heart for her, when her nostrils scent the smoke from thy pipe?"

The old man chuckled. "True. I be a garrulous *mata punie*. Here, child, make thyself a cigarette," and he gave her a piece of twist tobacco. "Then bring me another piece of kava. Wilt drink more, friend?"

"Aye, another bowl with thee, old Sru."

\* \* \* \* \*

"This Tanielu was the captain of a whaleship that was cast away here on Ponapé. He was a rich man, and made friends with Nanakin the king, who gave him land and built him a house, and made much of him. He helped Nanakin in his wars, and in one battle at Roan Kiti, he and his sailors slew ninety-five men with their muskets.

"He had many wives, and then one day he saw a girl named Niniea. She was the daughter of the chief of Matalanien, and he thought her very beautiful, though to my mind she was but a little rat of a thing—not tall and stout, but thin and slender as the bamboo canes that grow on the margin of the river. But she had witches' blood in her (for her mother was a sorceress), and she bewitched Tanielu, who became as a child in her hands. It is an easy thing for even a very young girl to turn a great man into a fool, and that is what this Niniea did to the white man.

"He sent away all his wives—which was disgraceful—and Niniea alone ruled his house, and spoke haughtily to even the wives of the great chief, who feared to resent her rudeness, for she could cause the death of any person by reason of her witchcraft. But the white man every day made more and more of her, and instead of thinking of war and hunting, and all that is manly, stayed inside his house with this rat of a girl.

"Trouble soon came.

“One day a young man named Sikra, who was of a good family, and had fought side by side with Tanielu, was, with other young men, playing at throwing the blunted lance on the sward in front of the white man’s house. Niniea, with her women—for she was now such a great lady that she had four attendants—was seated on a mat watching the game, when by some mischance Sikra’s blunted lance went astray, and struck her on the foot. She cried out with pain, and then Tanielu, who saw what had happened, went into his house, and came out with a sword and struck Sikra with it across the back of his neck, so that his head fell upon the ground; for Sikra, knowing that he had given such offence, had knelt and bent his head in contrition.

“Now this thing greatly angered the family of Sikra. They loved Tanielu, and knew that he was bewitched, so bore no anger against him, but they were hot for revenge upon Niniea. So one night, when her husband was away visiting another white man at a distant village, some women, with many protestations of goodwill—my own sister was one—brought her a present of two red-backed flying-fish, already cooked in the juice of the ‘oap,’ which sends people into a dull slumber for a whole day and night. In a little while she was in a sound slumber—so sound that if she were struck in the face she would not have heeded.

“Then the women said ‘Now let us consult Jikieru the priest. He is a wise man, and hates Niniea even as we do!’ So they went to Jikieru, who said he would commune with the gods, and tell them what to do in a little time. He shut himself up in his house, and by-and-by he threw open his door and sprang out, and he quivered from head to foot, for the god Nanawit had entered into him, and blood came from his nostrils, and ran down his chest, which was dyed a

bright yellow with turmeric. And when he spoke, he groaned, and spoke with the voice of Nanawit, which is deep and hollow.

“ ‘Bring this disturber of harmony and peace—this *faatane*\*—after me to the house of Parika the Tokelau,’ he said.

“The women hurried back to the house of Tanielu, and lifting Niniea in their arms, they carried her to the dwelling of Parika, which was apart from the village. Now this Parika was a young foreigner from Tokelau,† and was a great favourite with the unmarried women, who all loved him, though he was a dissolute and quarrelsome young man, and feared no one—not even Jikieru, who therefore hated him, for Parika had said that the priest was but a ‘lying old thief.’

“ ‘Bring her inside,’ said the priest. They obeyed, and there by the light of a small fire they saw the figure of Parika lying upon his best and finest sleeping mat. He was very drunk with green kava, and when Jikieru spurned him with his foot, he made no sign.

“ ‘Lay her beside him,’ said the priest, ‘when they die and then awaken their souls will travel together.’

“So they laid Niniea’s head upon the shoulder of Parika, and taking his right hand, twined it among her locks as do lovers ere they sink to slumber. Then my sister Sā took a very fine mat as soft as silk, and threw it over the two sleepers, and then she, the priest, and the other women, came away with great joy in their hearts, although they were sorry for Tanielu.

“Towards dawn our white man returned, accompanied by two others—Lawson and Petersen—who had come to stay with him on a visit, and do honour to Niniea, about whom Tanielu was forever speaking, and whom they had not yet seen.

\* Succubus. † The Equatorial Islands of the Pacific.



“ ‘Why is my house in darkness?’ he cried angrily. ‘Where is my wife? Where are her women? Ho, people, come hither. Why all this silence? Am I insulted in mine own town—I and my two friends! What a sorry welcome is this?’

“Then one by one the head men of the town walked slowly towards him as he stood in his doorway with the two other white men. They had all been sitting on the ground behind trees, with their faces blacked with dye and their heads covered with mats as a sign of shame and grief. No one of them spoke, but they all sat in a row before Tanielu.

“ ‘What is all this foolery?’ cried Tanielu fiercely, ‘where is my wife? Why is my house darkened?’

“Then Pelita-sru—whose son Tanielu was by adoption, rose, and, still covering his face with a mat, put out his hand, and said, ‘Come with us.’

“ ‘Is my wife dead?’ said Tanielu, and he placed his hand upon his forehead.

“ ‘Nay, not dead,’ replied Pelita-sru, ‘come with us and see the dishonour put upon thee. To thy hands have we left the punishment of wicked and shameless people.’

“And then, as the sound of a mighty breaker upon the reef, came a roar from the people, ‘Aye, let Tanielu, our beloved, our white man, our leader in war, wipe out the stain upon his honour!’

“Pelita-sru, with his arm around the waist of Tanielu, led him to the house of Parika, and all the people followed. When they came to the door, Pelita stopped and said:

“ ‘Enter, and behold.’

“Tanielu pushed open the door, and went in. We—there were many hundreds of people—waited.

“Presently he came outside and his face was the face of a man who has seen a ghost. He went to the

white man Lawson, and his lips twitched, and he choked and mumbled, and took the six-barrelled little gun from his belt. Then he let it fall upon the ground.

“‘I cannot do it,’ he said to Pelita-sru and the two white men, ‘she is too young. Let it be someone else.’ And then he sobbed, and walked away, staggeringly, into the forest.

“Then, at the bidding of Pelita-sru, four women went into the house with thin strong cords, and put them around the necks of Niniea and Parika—as is done to the widows in Fiji. In a little while they came out and said: ‘It is done. They are dead.’

“Ah, Tanielu was a great man; yet because of this little rat of a girl he killed himself in the forest that night, by thrusting a knife into his heart.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Child, there were great white men in the good old times.”

## “THE GENTLE, PLODDING CHINAMAN”

HALF-A-DOZEN of us were sitting on the verandah of Manton's Hotel in Levuka, the former “capital” of Fiji, talking of divers things, when the Chinese labour question, as far as Fiji was concerned, cropped up, and was followed by stories of the Boxer rising, and then someone spoke about the propriety of European nations sending missionaries to Inland China—or any other part of it.

“I am surprised to hear you say that, Captain,” said one of the company—a Mr R——; “I have been a subscriber to missions to the Chinese for twenty years. They have achieved an enormous amount of good, and I am convinced that in the very near future we shall see thousands upon thousands of Christianised Chinese offering themselves as missionaries, not only to the remote parts of the vast Chinese Empire, but to darkest Africa.”

Captain O—— shook his head. “Not the kind of Chinamen I have met with,” he said.

“Ah, you are a sailor, and, though you have lived in China for so long, you don't know the Chinaman as the missionaries know him.”

“Thank the Lord, I *don't*. I only know the beast as many Europeans who have lived long in China know him—cunning, unreliable and treacherous, hating the foreign devil most fervently in his innermost soul—a born liar, hypocrite, and thief, capable of the most appalling cruelties when he can safely exercise his lust of hatred upon the foreign barbarian—especially when the barbarian is some hapless woman missionary.”

"That is a rather strong indictment," said someone with a laugh.

"Most unjust, Captain O——," protested Mr R——; "the average Chinaman, particularly of the agricultural and fisherman class, is a gentle, plodding creature, with a simple, child-like nature—and, in spite of the iniquitous legislation against him in the Australian Colonies, he has proved himself a great factor in the development of that country."

O—— gasped. "Oh, Lord! Has he! He has been a curse to Australia ever since he was let into the country, and despite the present stringent regulations, the yellow beast still manages to evade the poll tax, and gets into the Southern Colonies by way of the Northern Territory."

"It is an iniquitous and un-Christian thing to deprive a fellow-man of the right to live in peace on British soil."

"Not at all—it is only a just measure of self-protection. You can't poll-tax—I wish it were 'pole-axe'—the brutes too heavily."

"Why do you hate the Chinese so much?"

"Because I know something of them. I was sixteen years in the China-Sydney trade, and in that time carried many thousands of Chows to the Colonies, landing them at ports along the coast from Somerset to Melbourne, and got to know something of their habits. No language can describe their filthiness and their loathly customs. And the white woman who marries a Chinaman would mate with an ape."

"But many white women *have* married Chinamen in the Australian Colonies," triumphantly asserted Mr R——.

"True, women of a certain profession—sunk so low that their own former associates on the pavement regard them with disgust. It makes me sick to think

of the hundreds of thousands of pounds annually chucked away by English people on Chinese missions."

"Ah, you don't approve of mission work then?"

"Yes I do—but not in China. Poor Captain S——, of the *Catterthun*, used to say that whenever he took a party of missionaries from Sydney or Melbourne to China, and there were young women among them, he always offered up a fervent prayer that the ignorant, meddlesome fools who were sending them there would be damned to all eternity for such a crime."

"Is it a crime to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a nation which hungers for it?"

"They don't hunger for it, believe me. They don't want it. And it is a crime for us to try and ram Christianity down the throats of a race who hate and despise us. Look at the Boxer rising! What was the cause of that awful tragedy but resentment at the persistency of the missionaries. Can anyone ever read of the unmentionable horrors that have befallen European women at the hands of your 'gentle, simple-minded creature' without a shudder? At the massacre of the Australian missionaries at Ku-ching (long before the Boxer affair) such hideous tortures were perpetrated upon women and children that were they described in print—but they were not. For one reason no man *could* write the story. Perhaps another reason is that if any paper had given the *whole* hideous tale, subscriptions for Missions to Inland China would have fallen off 50 per cent."

"Such men and women die a noble death."

"A pitiable, a useless death. I think it a wicked, a cruel thing that women missionaries are allowed to put foot anywhere outside the treaty ports. As for the men, they deserve all they get."

"God forbid that many Englishmen should hold your views on the subject."



"Hundreds of thousands do, and now English people are beginning to understand why the white Australian working man will not have his country ruined, and himself and family reduced to starvation, through the Colonies being flooded by an alien and dangerous race."

"Why 'dangerous'?"

"Dangerous because the employers of cheap labour favour the Chow; dangerous because the Chinaman is imitative and adaptive; dangerous because of their degrading and filthy habits, their opium and gambling dens, which have ruined, body and soul, hundreds of young Australian boys and girls; and dangerous because that every 'new' country under the British flag may let the yellow hordes swarm in and oust the white mechanic and labourer. For England is ever kind to the alien!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Ah, I could tell you some stories about the simple, fractable Ah Sin. I once landed—after a long passage—seven hundred Chinamen and nine Chinese women at Cooktown—no, it will leave a nasty taste in my mouth, so I'll say no more. Pass that whisky along."

## “MAUDIE”

A SYDNEY collier was stranded on the reef near Nouméa in New Caledonia, and the boatswain came ashore carrying a large, placid-faced goose.

“I want to find shore lodgings and board for her until we are ready for sea again,” he explained. “She has been with us for nearly five years, and what she doesn’t know about foreign travel ain’t worth knowing—eh! Maudie, old girl?” and he pressed her feathered cheek to his.

I succeeded in finding suitable accommodation for “Maudie” at a small charge, food included, for one week with a daily lettuce as an “extra.”

“She just loves them frizzy lettuce,” said the mariner, as after an affectionate farewell to his charge he walked down the street with me; “it does her plumage good and keeps her from puttin’ on too much fat. She near died once at Tchio from a sorter stummick apoplexy caused by eatin’ some nibs of raw garlic. The skipper near went outer his mind—she belongs to him—and he cursed our Dago cook up hill and down dale for leaving it lyin’ about. She was bad for five days, and the old man had her in his own bunk all the time, a-nursin’ an’ dosin’ her. It would make you laugh, sir, to see that goose followin’ him about the decks. When we are at sea with the after-awnin’ spread, and it is hot weather, the old man sits there in a deck chair, and Maudie sits beside him half-asleep. Once, when we was off Yasawa during heavy weather, a bit of a sea come aboard, and Maudie went over the side.

Lord! you should ha' seen the skipper. He's a little, fat chap, with bandy legs, but he just flew up on the bridge, yellin' to the mate to clear the boat, and nearly breakin' the engine-room telegraph, swearin' at us and threatenin' to murder us if we weren't slippy. It was no joke, sir, I can tell you, for we was in ballast, and rollin' like an empty cask, and the boat was nearly stove in before we could unhook the falls, and all the time the old man was yellin' and cussin' at us like a madman, callin' us all the things he could lay his tongue to, only stoppin' to look at the goose, which he could see every now and then ridin' a-top of a sea. Lord! sir, he cursed enough to start the rivets in the steamer's plates. At last we got away, some of us laughin' and some swearin', and in about twenty minutes we picked her up—not hurt a bit—and was pullin' back to the ship. First of all we passed her up to the old man, who carried her into his own cabin and put her in his bunk to dry and get her nerves back; then he came up to us smilin' as the boat was being hoisted up.

"'Mr Hogan,' he says to the second mate, 'that's about the smartest bit of work I've seen for a long time, and you and the boat's crew are deservin' of the greatest credit. Come into my cabin, Mr Hogan, and you, bo'sun, go and tell the steward to give you a bottle o' Hollands for yourself and the other three men.' And when we got to Levuka he give me and the other chaps thirty shillin's, and told us to go ashore and spend it."

"He must be fond of Maudie," I observed.

"Fond of her! If it wasn't that he's so busy on board he would have brought her ashore himself, but he says to me, 'Bo'sun, I want you to take a letter to the Consul, and you must take Maudie and find lodgin's for her. I'm afeerd of her bein' injoored by some of

these clumsy, jabberin' longshoremen if she gets outer my cabin on to the deck, with all that wreckin' tackle lyin' about !' Now, sir, here is the Consul's office, and I'm much obliged."

"Don't mention it. But go and deliver your letter and then come with me. There is a café close by where they sell English beer."

When he returned we went to the Café Palais, and over the sparkling Bass he told me something further anent Maudie.

"You see, sir, I knows the true story of that goose—I am the only one except the old man himself what does know it to rights. About five year ago we took coals to Havannah Harbour. The skipper had his wife and one child aboard—a little girl about four year old. One day the captain of another steamer lyin' near us come aboard with a young goose.

"'Here, Sam,' says he to our skipper—they were old shipmates—'here's a pet goose for little Rachel.'

"The child—she was a bright little thing—took to the goose like anything, and the goose took to her, follerin' her all over the deck and squawkin' dismal when she missed her. On the way out from Sydney the youngster had a big doll called 'Maudie,' but one day it fell from the bridge, where she was nursing it, on to the iron deck, and its chiny head was smashed to pieces. So when she got the goose she called it 'Maudie,' after the doll, and really, sir, I believe that that bird actually knew the child loved it, for it would let her do most anything with it—carry it about, nurse it, put dolly's hats on its head, and all sorts of things; and many's the time we used to laugh till we near cried to see the child and the goose walkin' all round the decks—'goin' visitin',' she called it. And the old man and his missus used to laugh too. They was awful fond of little Rachel, because, although they had been

married for thirteen years, she was the only child as was born alive.

"Our next trip was to Matupi, in New Britain. We was a long time there discharging on account o' the fever, and one night the captain's wife got it, and was dead an' buried in a week or so.

"We left that rotten hole of a Matupi two days after, and we was hardly clear of the land when the skipper comes to me with his face as white as a sheet and crying like a child.

"'My child—my little Rachel!' he says in a whisper; 'she's got it.'

"Did you ever see anyone die o' fever, sir? It's awful; but, thank God, that poor little thing didn't suffer long.

"Me and the carpenter sawed up a big piece of cedarwood, and made and polished a regular coffin. We worked at it all night, and the ship was as quiet as the grave—no one hardly speakin', and only the *thump, thump*, of the engines jarrin' on your ears.

"At sunrise it was a dead calm, and all hands mustered amidships, and the engines stopped, and the old man—who couldn't do it himself, he was too shaky—got the mate to read the service, and the little coffin, weighted with fire-bars, was slid over the side.

"And then—as true as I am a livin' man, sir—that there goose what you saw just now, whether she did it o' purpose or not, I don't know, gives a croak, opens her wings, and splashes down into the water and swims round and round, puttin' her bill into the bubbles that was comin' up—like as if she was a-tryin' to find out where the little maid had gone.

"The next thing was the old man jumps overboard, too, and throws up his hands—like that," and the seaman held up his arms; "he meant to drown hisself.



But the second mate was after him like a shot, and we got him aboard again—with the goose as well.

“He was very ill for a long time, and had a sorter delirium relapse like; but when he come round to his senses again he says to me quiet like, ‘Rogers,’ says he, ‘where is that goose?’

“‘In the galley, sir,’ says I.

“‘Bring her here to me,’ he says softly.

“I brought her to him, and he took her up and put her face against his cheek, his hands shakin’, and stroked her back. ‘Poor Maudie,’ says he, ‘there’s only you and me left now, but we’ll be shipmates for a long time.’”

## BY ORDER OF THE KING

WHEN the late King Malietoa of Samoa was experiencing his first trouble with Germany, and the agents of that power were stirring his subjects to rebellion, he was extremely anxious to thoroughly arm his forces and cope with the rebels, who, it was well known, were being secretly supplied with arms and ammunition by the Hamburg house of Godeffroy and Sohn, whose headquarters were in Apia. This was in direct violation of the agreement entered into by the consular representatives of England, Germany, the United States and France, that no subjects of those nationalities residing in Samoa should sell arms or ammunition to Malietoa and his followers, nor to the rebel party.

The latter were daily increasing in strength, and boasted that before long they would capture and loof Apia, and kill all Europeans who favoured Malietoa. Matters were in a very critical state when there one day sailed into Apia harbour a barquentine of 500 tons, named the *Venus*, and in less than an hour the news spread like wildfire that she had on board some hundreds of Snider rifles and several cases of Winchesters, together with an ample supply of ammunition, and ere long the vessel was surrounded by canoes literally packed together, and her decks filled with many hundreds of excited natives, all eager to buy *fana tataka manava* (breechloading rifles). But the Consuls had been before them, and had warned the master and supercargo of the *Venus* that if a single rifle was sold

they would seize the vessel and detain her—she being a British ship—until the arrival of an English ship of war.

The supercargo, who was a nice, pleasant-spoken young man, frankly admitted that it was a great and unexpected disappointment to him not to be able to dispose of the arms, as he would now have to carry them about over the Pacific for another three or four months, as the ship was bound on a long trading voyage throughout the Gilbert, Marshall and Caroline Groups, and then finally take them back to Sydney.

“And then I shall get into hot water with the owners,” he said ruefully, “as I don’t suppose I shall be able to sell more than a hundred or so of the guns in the Gilberts and Marshalls.” Then he asked the Consuls if they would be so good as to clear the ship of the natives. “If you won’t let me sell my guns, gentlemen, you can at least save me the annoyance of having the vessel’s deck filled with natives. Besides that, it is Sunday and I’m going ashore to church.”

The Consuls stared, for the young gentleman had formerly resided for some years in Samoa, and had by no means achieved distinction for his religious tendencies, which were regarded—no doubt mistakenly—as being absolutely *nil*.

“I think,” said the German consul, who was a very wily and astute personage, “that the best thing would be for a guard of the Municipal police to remain on board until you sail.”

“Just the very thing, Herr Weber,” said Mr Supercargo effusively, and orders were sent on shore for the police boat to come off, and the German consul felt satisfied—Malietoa would get no arms from the *Venus* at any rate. (I must mention that the English and American resident merchants were strongly in favour of King Malietoa, and, had they dared, would have

connived at his being supplied with all the arms he wanted.)

This matter arranged, the Consuls inquired what other cargo the *Venus* had under hatches, and were all delighted to learn that the bulk of it was provisions, for the town was very short of European food, and the white men and their families had been without such necessary articles as flour, sugar, beer and whisky for two months. This was owing to a large German ship named the *Anna*, which was loaded with stores, having been lost on the voyage from Sydney to Apia. They all at once begged the supercargo to quote his prices. He shook his head and smiled—almost sadly.

“No, no, gentlemen. You must give *me* a chance with my provisions if you won’t with the guns. I must first find out to-morrow how prices are going on shore, and then we can talk business. But not to-day. I’ve made a new rule of late not to do business of any kind on Sundays.”

The Consuls retired, feeling rather savage; still they could not blame the pleasant-mannered young gentleman for looking after his own interests. However, he was thoughtful enough to give them a couple of cases of beer, a case of whisky, and some delicacies from the cabin stores, to take ashore with them. Then after they had gone he sat down and wrote a note in Samoan to His Majesty King Malietoa, making an appointment with him and his chiefs at a little bush village named Tanuamamanono at eight o’clock that evening. At 10.30 he attended morning service in the little Mission Church on Vaisigago Creek; and an hour after it was over he was strolling down to Matafele—the German quarter of the town—to lunch at the hotel there, when a little native girl overtook him, and, as she walked past, quietly slipped a note into his hand.

Late that night he returned on board the *Venus*. The captain was awaiting him.

"Well?" inquired the worthy mariner anxiously.

"Oh, it's all right. Malietoa has £700 in English and American gold. I saw and counted it. And he and his chiefs have given me their signed bond to pay the balance of £500 in twelve months whether they come out on top or not." Then he turned in.

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At three o'clock in the afternoon he met the three Consuls and several of the leading storekeepers, by appointment, at the hotel, and at once proceeded to business.

"Now, gentlemen, I have an offer to make. I'll put it in as few words as possible. You are all very hard-up for provisions, and I have a ship-load. I'll sell you the lot, or as much as you want, at the usual 50 per cent. on Sydney invoice price instead of asking you a hundred—which I'm pretty well sure you would pay rather than go for another month or two without European food. But I'll do this on one condition only."

"What is it?"

"That you, gentlemen,"—and he looked at the Consuls—"will allow me to land those confounded arms and cartridges of mine and take charge of them until I return from the north-west. I don't want to have to cart them about the North Pacific for three months or more when I want every available inch of space for stowing copra, oil and pearl-shell. And I don't want to waste time by calling here for them on my way back; but our other vessel, the *Susannah Booth*, will be here in a few weeks, and you can have them put on board her, and she can take them back to Sydney. And I'll pay \$100 to the municipal funds for storage, but not a cent more."



There was a brief consultation. Everyone, even Herr Weber, was in favour of the suggestion, and so an hour later the cases of Winchesters and Sniders, and the ammunition therefor, were sent on shore, and, after each case had been duly sealed with the British and American Consulate seals, placed in the building which was used as a barracks for the incorruptible police, and also as a jail.

Then the good church-going supercargo fulfilled his promise concerning the sale of the rest of his cargo, and the *Venus* left Apia three days later, nearly an empty ship. In the supercargo's cabin were many bags of dollars and gold, but there were none that he handled with such a pleased smile as those which contained £700, which had been brought on board at night, after the arms had been taken on shore, and the police guard had left the ship.

\* \* \* \*

At daylight on the morning following the day on which the *Venus* sailed, it was discovered that some time in the dead of night a number of natives had burglarised the jail, and carried off not only every single case of arms and cartridges, but apparently the armed police guard as well, for not one of them could be found.

But in King Malietoa's lines there was great rejoicing towards dawn, as a hundred of his stalwart warriors, with many women, appeared, carrying the heavy cases, which were quickly broken open, and their longed-for contents taken out and distributed under His Majesty's personal supervision.

## ADrift IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

IN March, 1874, the brig *Leonora*, of which vessel the writer was supercargo, was wrecked on Kusaie (Strong's Island), the eastern outlier of the great Caroline Archipelago in the North Pacific. The master and owner of the *Leonora* was the notorious Captain "Bully" Hayes, with whom, a few months after the brig was cast away, I had a serious quarrel, which resulted in our parting company. The "difference," I may mention, arose out of Hayes's treatment of the natives; he and some of his numerous and ruffianly crew acting so cruelly to them—I and a few others of the ship's company (Samoan seamen) protesting.

During these four months I had made many friends among the scanty population—less than 500—of this beautiful and fertile island, and so when Hayes and I parted in hot anger, I eagerly accepted the invitation of a native named Kusi to come and reside at his village, which was ten miles distant. It was called Leassé, and was situated on the shores of a lovely little bay, one of the many nooks of Coquille harbour. The village, of which my friend Kusi was the head man, consisted of less than a score of houses, inhabited by some of the kindest and most amiable people I have ever known in the South Seas, and here I spent some of the happiest months of my existence, undisturbed by the licence and bloodshed which was distracting that portion of the island in which Hayes and the majority of his ship's company had settled.

The household of my host consisted of himself, his wife Tulpé, and their daughter Kinie—a charming,

vivacious, and very handsome child of eleven years of age, who was the mimic and life of the village. She and I soon became fast comrades, and in all my shooting and fishing excursions she invariably accompanied me. Sometimes—especially when I was bent on shooting wild pig in the mountain forest—we would be joined by a sturdy boy of fourteen, named Nān, and nothing gave the two greater pleasure than for me to let them have a shot at a pig with my much-prized Winchester carbine—one of my few belongings saved from the wreck.

The villagers had built and presented me with a fishing canoe—a valuable piece of property on Strong's Island—and in this canoe my host Kusi, Kinie, Nān and I, would sometimes voyage right round the island; calling at each village (except that in which Captain Hayes was located), spending a night at each place, and returning to my beloved Leassé after a three to five days' absence. Everywhere I was treated with the most unbounded hospitality; no one could do enough for me, and the presents of food we received during our trip would have laden a small cutter to her waterways.

One evening in September, six months after the loss of the *Leonora*, the boy Nān, Kinie and I set out for an all-night fishing excursion to a favourite spot outside the barrier reef, and about three miles from Cap Vauvillier, the western cape of the island. Here at a depth of from 80 to 120 fathoms we used to catch on moonless nights a huge nocturnal-feeding fish called "palu" (*Ruvettus*), much prized by the natives on account of the valuable oil it yielded, apart from the richness of its flesh. We took with us a basketful of cooked food, a piece of baked pork, a fowl, one pineapple, ten young drinking coconuts, and about half-a-dozen large sweet potatoes.

Just as we were about to start, Kuis and Tulpé, who had been at work on their banana plantation for the day, came home, and called out to us to be careful to keep well in under the lee of Cap Vauvillier, as from the mountains they had seen indications of heavy rain squalls coming from the east or windward side of the island, and that "it was an easy thing to be blown off the land."

Pushing off from the beach we paddled along the shore for a couple of miles, under the light of myriad stars, and over water as smooth as the surface of a mirror; then, bearing to the starboard hand, we entered a narrow passage through the reef, and gained the open sea; and an hour later were on the fishing ground and let go our stone killick in sixty fathoms of water.

For an hour we fished without success, catching only a few small fish of the proper species; then Nān hooked a fine "palu" of over 60 lbs., which, after some trouble, we safely landed and placed in the canoe amidships.

I had just refilled my pipe, and the boy and girl had lit their cigarettes of black tobacco rolled in dried banana leaf, when the sky rapidly became overcast, and we saw the white wall of a heavy rain squall coming down from the lofty heights of Mont Crozer nearly three thousand feet above. In ten minutes it was upon us with a rush and a roar, for there was wind as well as rain with it. It lasted barely a quarter of an hour, during which time Kinie was constantly employed in bailing the canoe, for, in addition to the terrific downpour of rain, we were shipping water over the sides of our little craft, which was straining and pitching at the thin cable of coir rope, and Nān and I had great trouble in keeping her head on to the sea, which had risen with the usual rapidity of the tropics.

Just as the last of the fierce, stinging, rain had swept away with a dull hum to leeward, and the stars had come to life again, another gust of wind struck us with such violence that the killick line parted, and in an instant we broached-to, the outrigger rose clean out of the water, went up in the air, and over went the canoe, bottom up.

We all three came to the surface and held on to the canoe, which we soon righted and freed of water by jerking her backwards and forwards until she was half emptied; then Kinie, who was lightest and who had stuck to the wooden scoop (bailer), clambered in and shot out the rest of the water, whilst Nān and I at bow and stern kept the light craft head on to the seas. Watching our chance for a lull in the now lumpy waves we succeeded in getting on board again—only just in time, as a second rain squall came upon us.

"We must run before it," shouted Nān to me through the roar of the rain and the howling of the wind, "we cannot face wind and sea like this."

Very carefully with our two paddles the boy and I (Kinie had lost her paddle) "wore" the canoe. He sat on the for'ard thwart, which was the canoe end of the for'ard outrigger pole, and I astern, whilst Kinie, still bailing, was on her knees amidships.

Up to this time none of us had felt any alarm, for we knew that, although we might have to run before the successive squalls, they would not last more than an hour or two, and that it would only mean an eight or ten miles' wearisome paddling back to land. We little dreamt of what lay before us.

This second rain and wind squall lasted quite half-an-hour, during which time we were travelling quite three knots an hour, the outrigger every now and then lifting out of the sea in an alarming manner, or else burying itself a couple of feet under the surface—

equally as dangerous. Then once more (although the wind still kept its force) the stars came out, and shone down upon us from a vault of cloudless blue, and we were able to observe our condition.

Almost everything had been lost in the way of food except the bunch of ten young coconuts and the sweet potatoes, which were in a cane basket. This had luckily been tied on to the grating of the outrigger, and so had escaped, together with a small wooden box of mine containing my extra fishing tackle, a spare (clay) pipe and three sticks of twist tobacco.

"Nān," I said, "the wind does not abate, and we are now seven miles or more from the land."

The boy turned to me, and I saw that he looked troubled.

"Rui, I fear for us. I fear greatly that because of the steadiness of the wind and the bright sky that it is the strong easterly *matagi* (gales) which have come upon us, and which last sometimes for thirty days. Feel," and he put up his open hand, "it is cool and dry."

"No," I said, "it is too soon yet—not for another ten days."

He shook his head. "Sometimes the easterly *matagi* come before their usual time. And look at the sky."

I confess I felt a sinking at heart, for, even as the boy spoke, I remembered that Hayes had once told me about the erratic weather in the Carolines during the latter months of the year.

"Rui," said Kinie, "Nān is right. I knew it when we saw the clear sky so soon. We cannot get back to Kusaie. But Pingelap and Mokil and Ponāpe lie before us—and God is overhead."

Pingelap, a group of three small low islands enclosed in a barrier reef, was 200 miles distant; beyond was



Mokil, another 100, and another 200 further west the high land of Ponāpe, the principal of the Caroline Group—any one of them a long cry from Strong's Island in a small fishing canoe manned by three people, and with a day's food between them!

"Nān," I said, "cannot we turn and try to get back under the lee of the land?"

"We can try," he replied.

We did try, and in less than an hour had to give up from exhaustion, and again wear the canoe round to save us from capsizing or being swamped, for the wind had now settled down into a steady half-gale, and the short, choppy seas raised by the first squalls had given place to a long, mountainous swell, capped by "white horses." Every now and then as we sank into the trough we lost sight of the high land astern, and then as we mounted again upon a heaving crest the silence and darkness of those gloomy watery valleys was followed by the whistling of the wind and the showers of spume which smote upon our backs.

We each drank a coconut, and ate the thin lining of the nut, letting the canoe run meanwhile steadily to the W. and N., dead before the wind. She steered beautifully over the long rollers, and now took in but very little water, for the sea was fast "setting" into a steady sweep, *i.e.* becoming more regular. But as I glanced astern and saw the lofty mountains of Kusaie becoming more and more indistinct, my courage failed me.

"Nān," I said, "let us tie one paddle to the cane basket, and make a sea-anchor, so that we can lie-to to the wind and sea until daylight."

He shook his head. "That will not do, Rui; the sea drives too fast, and we should swamp. And we cannot do aught else but go on before the wind till we

come to Pingelap, for never can we get back to Kusaie in face of an easterly *matagi*."

And then, to cheer me, both the boy and girl—whose dauntless courage shamed me—told me of fishing parties who had been blown off the island, and reached either Pingelap, Mokil, and even Ponāpe in safety, though they had suffered fearfully from hunger and thirst.

All that night we ran before the gale. Kinie at dawn, and when the mountain-tops of her island home were just visible above the sea-rim, lay down for'ard and slept for a couple of hours, and I followed suit in the body of the canoe amidships, leaving Nān to steer. When I awoke it must have been nine o'clock, and Kinie was steering, Nān having gone for'ard for his sleep.

Towards noon we each ate a sweet potato, and shared one of the remaining seven drinking coconuts between us, and although there was nothing, not even a sea bird in sight, I felt my spirits rise, when Nān asked me if I would not be glad of a smoke. I had lost my wooden pipe when we capsized, but I still had the stumpy old clay left in my fishing-tackle box, though my matches had gone, as I thought. Then, as I saw the gleam in the boy's dark eyes, I remembered that on the preceding night I had given him my box of Swedish matches, which were in a tin that had once held curry powder, and was watertight. He had stuck the tin for security under one of the cinnet lashings of the outrigger, and had just found it with all the contents quite dry. Oh, the delight of that smoke of sodden, negro-head tobacco!

All that day we kept on a steady W. by N. course, making nearly three knots an hour, sometimes paddling, sometimes resting, and at dusk, whilst the boy and girl were saying their evening prayer, and I was steer-

ing, there came a flight of flying-fish right across the canoe, and the unlucky number of thirteen fell into the canoe. We ate one each, raw, and then cut open the others and spread them on the outrigger grating to dry.

About midnight the wind moderated somewhat, and I felt so tired out that I again suggested the sea-anchor to Nān. He protested most energetically, and pointed to certain stars under which lay Mokil and Ponāpe. I laid myself down in the bottom of the canoe amidships, and was soon fast asleep, whilst this brave boy and girl, tired out as they were, remained awake and kept our tiny craft on her course.

Some time after dawn, and whilst I was still in a sound slumber, I was awakened by Nān crying out that a ship was in sight. Confused and stupid from my sudden awakening, I rose, missed my balance and fell over on the outrigger platform, and in another three seconds the canoe had upset, and we again had the task of freeing her of water, and getting on board again. Fortunately every article had been secured, so we lost nothing. The ship, I saw, was hull down and steering south, so there was no hope of our being seen. In a few hours she was out of sight, and we were again alone upon the ocean.

All that day the wind blew with steady force, the sky was a cloudless blue, and the sun so fiercely hot that whenever the sea water touched our skins a white rime of salt formed upon it in a few minutes, and poor little Kinie's skin from her head to her waist began to turn from a light brown to an angry red. I, despite her remonstrances, cut out the front of my shirt from the collar down, and made a sort of poncho, which I slipped over her head.

The night passed without incident. Overhead, the same still, wonderful dome of unflecked blue, lit up

by its shining stars; below and with us the long, long lines of sweeping mountain seas, flecked with white and shining bright on their crests, black, dismal and terrifying in the deep valleys of the trough.

During the day Nān and I had contrived to make a small sail from the major portion of my dungaree pants, and his own waist cloth. We set it upon sheer-legs of cane taken from the outrigger platform, and lashed and stayed it securely to the for'ard outrigger pole, with two back-stays of stout fishing-line made fast to the sides of the 'midship seat. Small as it was, it helped us splendidly, and we leapt and spun along over the seas, making at least four knots, though there was an easterly current of two knots against us.

During that day, although we were suffering severely from thirst, we drank but two coconuts between us, for Nān and I feared that we might pass to leeward of Pingelap, or perhaps even not sight it, and be compelled to run on for Mokil Island—another hundred miles.

Soon after daylight, whilst Nān and Kinie were taking their "watch below" and I was steering, I saw three mound-like hummocks abreast of us, just showing above the sea-rim, and about fifteen or twenty miles distant. They were the three islands of Pingelap—and we were hopelessly to leeward!

Rousing up the boy and girl I pointed silently to the grey loom of the island. That my face wore a despairing look I have no doubt.

"It does not matter, Rui," said the girl—"Not for us is Pingelap."

For an hour or two we scarcely spoke a word in our bitter disappointment. Suddenly Nān, who was for'ard, stood up and gazed at something ahead, then he gave a shout.

"Another ship, another ship!" he cried.

It was indeed another ship—a brig beating to windward, and not more than five miles distant. The blinding glare of the sun had prevented us from seeing her sooner than we did. In a few minutes, to our joy, we saw her go about, and then felt certain that she was beating up to Pingelap, and could not fail to see us.

Half-an-hour later we were seen, and the brig backed her main yard, and we were taken on board and most kindly treated. The vessel was a whaler, the *Kamehameha IV*, of Honolulu, Captain Fred Wicks, and was beating up to Pingelap for wood and water.

\* \* \* \* \*

A fortnight later we were landed—canoe as well—at Port Lêle on Strong's Island, and the same day went home to Leassé, when the village went mad with joy, for no one doubted but that we had perished.

Five months after I left the island in H.M.S. *Rosario*, bound to Sydney, N.S.W.

## THE DEADLY "OAP"

IN all the mountainous islands of the Caroline Archipelago there grows on the littoral a slender and straight-limbed plant which is of the highest value to the natives. It is called "oap," and on Kusaie (Strong's Island) it is especially abundant. Yet although by its use the people can capture immense quantities of fish with the greatest ease in half-an-hour, the pious American missionaries who "labour" among the Micronesians have made many efforts to have the plant eradicated on account of its being employed for Malthusian purposes. But Nature was too strong and bountiful to be overridden by the silly, well-meaning gentlemen from Boston; and, despite all the uprootings and burnings, the "oap" continued to flourish in open defiance of the pious men who wished to suppress it.

During the "seventies," when I was shipwrecked on Strong's Island, I had many opportunities of witnessing the method of capturing fish by means of the "oap," and was also inducted into the manner of preparing it by my native "father"—genial-hearted, stalwart Kusi. After the loss of the vessel I took up my quarters in Leassé village, of which Kusi was head man. He was a great fisherman, and therefore a man after my own heart, and many, many happy days we spent together either in deep-sea fishing, miles from the land in over a hundred fathoms of water, or inside the curiously-shaped lagoon which runs along the coast from Port Lottin to Cap Vauvillier. Ostensibly a "brand plucked from the burning" by the Boston



missionaries, and never smoking on Sundays (except *in camera*), he was really a very decent whole-souled heathen, who longed for the old times of his boyhood, with the merry nocturnal dances, and other concomitant allurements thereof "when the heart is young."

"I had three wives when I was a young man and a heathen," he said meditatively one day, "and they worked hard on my land and kept my house full of food. Now I have but one, and all the money I make by selling my yams and pigs to the whaleships I have to give to Likiak Sa (the native pastor). I am indeed a poor wretch." Then he flamed into sudden anger—"American missionaries are no good! They are not like the English missionaries in Tahiti and Samoa. I have lived there, and know. There, if you do not go to church, you are not fined. Here in Kusaie, if you do not go to church through sickness you must pay \$2 to Likiak Sa. And the white missionaries who come here every year from Boston in the *Morning Star* are worse. 'Money, money, money, give us money!' they cry; 'give us money to help to make other people Christians as we have made you Christians.' They have eaten at our guts and so now we are gutless" (poverty-stricken).

Poor Kusi! I could only console him by saying that in Tonga the natives were just as badly off under missionary rule. Smoking on Sunday was punished by a fine of \$5, and if a child of tender years laughed loudly in public on the Sabbath day, the parents had to pay a fine of \$3, or do three days' work on the public roads.

Still Kusi, though the glory of the old times had vanished, enjoyed life. He hunted the wild mountain pigs, caught turtle, and was the moving spirit in all "oap" fishing parties—about which I began to write until I was led into religious matters.

A calm, windless day with a very low tide is a *sine qua non*. Discarding their European clothing (that is if neither the white missionary nor native teacher is anywhere in the vicinity of the village) the men, women and children don waist girdles of dracaena leaves or long grass. Then the "oap"—cut the previous day, and tied up in bundles like withes—is placed upon flat stones and pounded with wooden or stone mallets. A thick, viscid and milky-white juice exudes from the bruised plants, which are then rolled up into balls about the size of a large orange, and tied up in green banana leaves, softened by being held over a fire—making an almost perfect substitute for oiled silk or mackintosh. Then the preparations are complete, and off we start to the barrier reef, a mile distant, the women and girls carrying the bundles of "oap" in baskets slung over their smooth, red-brown shoulders, the men and boys with their fish spears.

The great, wide expanse of reef is bare, and only a gentle, heaving swell of the ocean is laving its "steep-to" seaward face. All over the reef are deep pools, some with bottoms of pure white, shining sand, some with brilliant many-hued forests of coral, and strangely-shaped seaweed and sponge, and all literally teeming with fish of such shape and colours that would delight the heart of Mr Savile Kent. In one pool, for instance, there would be perhaps a school of silvery mullet swimming on the surface; below them, and moving to and fro among the gorgeous coral forest, scores of scarlet-scaled, yellow-finned rock-cod, ranging from 5 lbs. to 30 lbs., with countless hundreds of wrasse, parrot, and other rock fish. Colour! All the colours in Nature! Green, barred with gold; gold, barred with jet black; bright blue with crimson spots; green with vertical stripes of orange and some a pale, iridescent pink. In the shallower ponds swarms of

silvery bream with broad wavy fins and tails herded together in masses, feeding upon a short, fleshy marine weed growing upon the bottom; here and there, in the very deep pools would be a hawk-bill turtle or two, and huge fierce-eyed green eels protruded their narrow, vicious heads from out the cricks and crannies of the coral walls—well knowing that the shadows of the humans above them meant a great repast after the "oap" had done its work.

Kusis apportions a certain number of his people to each pool. The women hand the bundles of "oap" to the men, and stand by. Then, at a signal from Kusis, each man, holding a bundle of "oap" in his hand, slips quietly over the ledge of his particular pool, dives to the bottom, and tears open the leaf covering. Almost before the men rise to the surface again, the crystal-clear water is discoloured to the resemblance of well-watered London milk, and then in two or three minutes fish appear, most of them swimming feebly upon their sides, or else, coming to the surface in their natural position, blindly running head-on against the sides of the coral walls, where they are either gaffed or speared. The largest—a kind of huge red-scaled fish much like a sea-perch, and weighing up to 30 lbs. or 40 lbs.—were not so much affected by the "oap" as their smaller brethren, and although they swam to and fro in a semi-dazed condition they evaded the gaff and had to be speared. Hundreds of large and many-hued "leather-jackets," however, came to the surface inert and apparently dead, but on being thrown into a pool free of "oap" soon recovered. With them were thousands of very small fry of all sorts of shapes and colours—these floated about dead; the great eels, upon which the Strong's Islanders look with horror, were the least susceptible of all to the influence of the plant, and appeared last of all, swimming with their

heads erected a few inches out of the water, and making for the edges of the pools.

In one long, narrow and deep fissure of the reef, which was open to the sea, several hawk-bill turtle were seen; quickly a net was placed in front of the opening. Three natives dived and soon turned the water into a dull milky white, then two others followed with more "oap," and in ten minutes four good-sized hawk-bills came gasping to the surface. They were quickly seized.

It is a curious fact that "oap" has no effect upon the natives when they are using it in fishing. Administered internally, however, its effects, even in a minute dose, are drastic and serious.

## POLYNESIAN HUMOUR

DURING a six months' residence on Niué (generally known as Savage Island), 400 miles east of Samoa, I had much spare time to give up to deep-sea fishing. Niué, unlike most of the Pacific Islands, has no barrier reef—the shore rising “steep-to” from the sea—and consequently the water is very deep, even within fifty fathoms of the jagged cliffs of “upheaved” coral. Big fish, however, are scarce, and the natives, although they make splendid sailormen, are about the poorest fishermen in the Pacific, owing to the extraordinary fertility of the island, which yields them such an ample supply of food that they only resort to fishing as a pastime, and not, like the people of the low-lying sandy atolls elsewhere where vegetable food is scarce, as a daily labour of necessity. Much of their fishing is done with rods, from the short, flat reef which skirts the base of the cliffs, and the fish are of poor quality and usually small.

There was, however, one—and one only—good fishing ground, abreast of a village called Fatiau, where in fine weather we used to catch great numbers of a brilliantly scarlet-scaled rock-cod called *pura*, much valued by the natives for the delicacy of its flavour. They are a pretty “deep-down” fish, seldom being caught at a less depth than of forty to fifty fathoms, and rarely exceeding 4 lbs. in weight.

One day a native named Soseni, to whom I had lent my deep-sea tackle, caught one weighing 10 lbs. He brought it ashore to the village of Avatele, where I was living, and exhibited it triumphantly; whereupon an

old Samoan named Lupo, who had lived for many years in the Gilbert and Marshall Groups, calmly observed that it was not much of a *pura*—he had seen a *pura* which two strong men could not lift.

Although he was a deacon, he was promptly told that he was a “lying Samoan,” for the natives of Savage Island are, although such eminent Christians, about the rudest and most uncouth race in the Pacific.

I stood to old Lupo.

“Have I not often told you,” I said, “that on *le au umi Okesālia* (Great Barrier Reef of Australia), the beche-de-mer fishermen have often caught black and white rock-cod which weigh 400 lbs.”

“*O tagata katoa kai ele kia ika*,” was the unanimous and crushing response—which freely translated is this, “Men always lie about the big fish they have caught, but which are never seen.”

“But I have shown you pictures of two,” I said indignantly.

“True; but we did not see the fishes themselves. What are pictures! Anyone can *fai* (make) a picture,” was the reply, and then the wit of the village, a fat, sleepy-eyed woman, with a piping voice, and whose name was Mahéke, put her chin up in the air, closed her eyes and said, as she clasped her hands, mincingly:

“My grandfather, who died before I was born, told me—just before I married my first husband—that he one day caught a flying fish, which was so long that he could not put it into his canoe. Whilst he was towing in on shore, many sharks came and bit such great pieces out of it, that he was ashamed to take it on shore to his family. There were fifty-three sharks, forty of them with young. My grandfather counted them all, and killed three, each of which disgorged forty young sharks much longer than the mother. And, although he was born blind, and had never been in a



canoe but once—when my great-grandmother and great-grandfather took him out to sea and drowned him because of his blindness, he became a wonderful fisherman, like Soseni and the white man here. And we knew that his story of the great flying-fish was true, for although we did not see any part of either the monstrous fish or of the three sharks which he had killed, he let us smell his hands. They smelled of shark; and, although this was long before I was born, I remember that it made me sick and faint, and that a large piece of tobacco only would do me good."

She paused, and then, dropping her hands to her sides, said in the most inimitable manner, with her fat face still turned upward, "There was always a bit of shark's liver hung up in my grandfather's house; and when he came home after catching the great flying-fish, he, being blind, ran against it. And he was no *kai ele ika*" (fish liar).

Now the humour of her concluding and apparently nonsensical remarks lay in the fact that sharks were rarely ever seen—let alone caught—at Savage Island, and the general Polynesian practice of hanging up the liver of a shark to obtain the oil was regarded by the Niuéans with disgust and contempt, as a sign of poverty.

When I was living at Mafautu, a large town on the island of Savai'i, in Samoa, I enjoyed another sample of Polynesian humour. The wit, and also the gay Lothario, of Mafautu was a stalwart young native who rejoiced in the name of Pulumatau-tane-ese-Lava ("The Superlatively Handsome Bull"). Being the town buffoon, he was a privileged person, and in his speech and actions took the greatest liberties with even the highest chiefs, who never resented it. Had they sought to punish, or even restrain, him for his gibes and practical jokes, they would only have incurred

further ridicule, and subjected themselves to much outspoken comment as thin-skinned persons unable to appreciate a joke; for the Samoans delight in the town fool, and are as proud of him as they are of their *taupo* (Town Maid).

One day there came to Matautu an English yacht, on which were several titled gentlemen, one of whom soon became noted for his extreme meanness. He was a keen would-be collector of native curios, but seldom acquired anything of value, for he would never go beyond two shillings for an article for which even a professional bric-a-brac collector would have offered £10. His friends were of the very opposite disposition, and paid the natives almost too generously for such things as old-time native dresses, weapons, kava-bowls, etc.

One day "Lima Vale" (the close-fisted), as his lordship had been named by the natives, attended service at the Mission Church, arrayed in the tall hat and frock coat of Piccadilly, much to the amusement of his companions, who were dressed in the usual white duck suits worn by intelligent people in the South Seas.

At the conclusion of the service, and as we left the church, we found our way impeded by Pulumatautane-ese-Lava, who presented a striking picture. He had dressed himself in a cast-off uniform of a German infantry captain, much too small for his herculean proportions; on his head was a battered white Christy minstrel bell-topper (lent to him by one of the crew of the yacht); and in his mouth was a long German pipe, from which was issuing volumes of smoke. His get-up caused an uproarious outburst of laughter, of which he took no notice, as, striding gravely up to Lord —, he took him by the arm, despite his lordship's energetic protests.

"You are my brother," he said in English, "and I

shall now give you my name—Pulumatau-tane-ese-Lava—and I shall take yours, which is Lima Vale, and means ‘the stingy one’!” and then, throwing an English penny amidst the laughing natives, he added in Samoan, “Go away, good people, and enjoy yourselves with my and my brother’s largesse.”

Then, despite the frantic struggles of his lordship to free himself from his tormentor, Pulumatau walked with, or rather pulled, his “brother” down to the yacht’s boat, into which he lifted him as if he were a child, and added insult to injury by asking his lordship to exchange hats!

\* \* \* \* \*

One day (it was the 23rd of May) I was lunching on board an English man-of-war then lying in Apia Harbour, when a native came on board with a letter to the commander. It was written in Samoan, and I was asked to translate it.

“It is from one of the Apia district chiefs,” I said, and then I read the letter, which was as follows:

“To the Captain of the English Man-of-War.

“I, Tui-le-tau, send you my greetings and love, and the love of my family, and send also my love to Queen Victoria. May you and all your officers and all your men remain well and strong. We Samoans have much love for England. Most noble sir; to-morrow will be the day of the Queen’s birth, and I have learned that at the hour of noon all the great cannons on your ship will be fired, so that the earth will quake with the noise thereof.

“Great sir; I cast myself at your feet. I have much love to you, but I beseech you not to fire the great guns to-morrow. Do not fire them for two days more, and my heart will be big with gratitude, because——” Here I had to stop and laugh.

"Because what?" asked the commander with an air of interest.

"Because my wife has a hen sitting on nine duck eggs, and to-morrow is the day for them to break their shells. Noble sir; if the great guns are fired then will they all perish and grief enter my house. But in three days it will not matter if they hear the guns. I beseech you to do me this favour."

\* \* \* \* \*

The people of Eastern Polynesia call boots *te vae puaka*—"pigs' feet," because, never having seen an animal larger than a pig until about 1800, they could not understand that white men's boots were made from the skin of bullocks and cows. So the name "pigs' feet" is still often given to boots or shoes.

About ten years ago one of the Marist Brothers' missionaries at Manga Reva called in at a native house, and found the entire family eating baked pork. It was a Friday, and the good father was shocked.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," he said, addressing the head of the family, "eating pig's flesh on a fast day!"

"True, father. We are eating the flesh—and you have the skin on your feet."

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a thundering old cannibal chief in the Solomon Islands, named Dakea, who was as avaricious and as vindictive as Shylock. Near his village were three small islands inhabited by a fisher community, who paid him tribute in old coconuts, pigs and shell money. Old Dakea bled them so mercilessly that at last they bucked, fortified their village, and refused to pay any more. Dakea thought it was only a piece of bluff; so he sent his brother Varogi to them to tell them

to hurry up with their tribute, and send it by Varogi, or he would come over and wipe them out.

Varogi, who was a great, hulking, fat fellow, was accompanied by only a few men. The fisher folk made them all prisoners. Then they took the fat man into the bush, and quietly strangled him. In half-an-hour they brought the body back wrapped up in mats, and placed it in the canoe. Then the prisoners were liberated.

"Get into your canoe and go back to Dakea," said the fishermen, "and tell him that we send him back his brother, and all the tribute he can carry."

When Dakea examined the defunct Varogi, he found that all the viscera had been removed, and the vacuum filled with husked coconuts, with shell money (cowries) for dunnage. The top of the skull had also been neatly sawn off, the brains taken out and replaced by shell money, and the head then restored to its original appearance.

Dakea left the fisher folk alone after that. He recognised the fact that they had done the thing delicately, and symbolically, as it were. Had they eaten his brother, it would have been a gross insult—but they had every right to eat his companions, who were men of no consequence. Instead of this they exercised a self-denial and courtesy which reflected credit upon them.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I first began my South Sea cruises there were five small gunboats built in Sydney by order of the Imperial Government to supervise the Kanaka Labour traffic. They were sailing vessels, rigged as fore-and-aft schooners, carried one Armstrong gun, a rocket tube, and were manned by twenty-five men under the command of a lieutenant and a navigating midshipman. One of these useless, slow, sailing craft was the

*Sandfly*, which was commanded by Lieutenant Bowers, a brilliant and gallant young officer, who was treacherously slaughtered with his boat's crew by Solomon Island savages whilst they were bathing in a river. I well remember how, years after, poor Bowers's skull was recovered by a white trader, who found it in a *gamal* house (temple) and recognised it by the upper jaw being fitted with some artificial teeth with a gold plate.

One day the little gunboat, on her way to Fiji, called at Tongoa in the New Hebrides, and a Fijian native teacher and his wife came on board and asked Bowers if he would take a small parcel to Fiji. "All right," said Bowers, "bring it on board quickly, as I am in a hurry."

The parcel was brought on board. It looked like a bundle of arrowroot tied up in leaves in the usual manner, and was addressed to a native Fijian pastor on Taviuni (in Fiji). There was a letter attached to it.

Three days later Bowers found it necessary to open the bundle, as it was beginning to make itself offensive, and discovered it to be a small uncooked pig. It was promptly thrown overboard. Then the letter was opened, and read by the Fijian interpreter. It was something like this: "Dear Father and Brother, I send you a pig to eat, and remember me and praise God. It will be brought to you by an English man-of-war. The captain is a kind young man," etc., etc.



## “SALOME, THE SHAMELESS”

ALL through the night Salomé the Samoan had sat crouched up under the scanty shelter of a little fishing hut, open at the sides, listening to the wild clamour of the wind, the whipping and lashing of the palm branches, and the roaring of the surf upon the reef; and now, as the dawn began to break, she rose and went outside to stretch her poor, thin little limbs, heedless of the stinging rain which beat upon her nude, red-brown shoulders, and drenched her straight, jet-black hair.

A little distance from where she stood, on the high bank of loose coral shingle, the spent but still foaming surf from the reef swept the long curving line of palm-fringed beach, and beyond—a boil of fleecy white and flying spume—the reef itself; and far away on the misty sea-rim the dulled-red disc of the rising sun.

As she watched, a sturdily-built native boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age, clad in but a girdle of coloured dracaena leaves, and carrying a basket of green coconut leaf, came along the narrow path that led to the hut and called her name.

The child—she was but eleven years old—turned, and a cry of joy escaped her; and the boy, setting down the basket, held out his hands and pressed his nose to hers.

“Art thou very hungry, Salomé?” he said, as, holding her hand, he led her back into the hut.

“Nay, not very hungry, Maru,” she answered, with something like a sob in her throat, “but this last beating was the worst I have yet had, and my back is as if it had been burnt with fire.” Then she wept.

The boy, from whose neck was suspended a small silver crucifix, stroked her head pityingly. "Sit thee down, Salomé the Samoan, and eat. See, here in the basket is a baked pigeon, two *taro*, some bananas, and a tin of *sartini* (sardines) which the white trader Pita opened and gave me for thee. For Pita\* hath a great pity for thee, and when he heard that the judge had ordered thee to be beaten he was angry and told the good father Grandseigne that it was a cruel thing to beat such a little one as thee, because thou art a disbeliever. Now eat."

He opened the basket, and spread out the contents upon the coarse, rain-soaked mat which covered the gravelled floor of the hut. Then, as the hungry child ate, he took a small gourd shell of coconut oil, and, seating himself behind her, began to gently rub her lacerated back with the oil.

"Dost remember how many stripes thou hadst, Salomé?"

"I know not, Maru. The *fakafili* (judge) said thirty, but after the tenth I could not tell, for my heart came into my throat, and I knew no more till Vili, the policeman, carried me to the pig-pen of Kalaua and cast me over into the mire. But the pigs were very quiet, and did not hurt me. Then, although the children came and jeered at me, and said I was well bestowed with mine own kith and kin, I did not mind, for as I lay in the mud I prayed to God and my heart became very strong."

Maru's soothing hand went slowly up and down the bruised and swollen back.

"Thy religion, Salomé, is a false one—the religion of those who are doomed to the torments of hell. Why be so foolish? Here we in Onā are good Katolikos, and shall enter into Paradise when we die, but thou

\* Peter.

shalt burn in everlasting fire. It is true what I say—the bikopo\* himself hath said it. The *lotu Peretania*† is an evil faith—only by *our* faith, which is the true faith, can one be saved from hell. Are not the sardines flavoursome, Salomé?"

The child turned, and with luminous eyes suddenly threw her arms around the neck of the back anointer.

"Aye, Maru, they are sweet. And I lied to thee when I said I was not hungry. Maru, thou wilt be beaten for giving food to me, if it be known."

"Nay," and the boy laughed with an air of pride, "who on Onā would dare to even whisper an evil word of me, I who am the son of the king, and who can read and write and speak in English and French, and in our own tongue as well! And the good father Grandseigne himself would let no one harm me. And to-morrow night I shall set fire to the house of Vili, so that it shall be destroyed, and he be rendered poverty-stricken, for in it he hath many fine mats worth many hundreds of dollars."

"Nay, nay, Maru! That is an evil thought of thine. It is written in the Word of God that we shall forgive those who beset us, even as we shall be forgiven when we are beset."

Maru shook his head dubiously. "Vili is a bad man, and beats his wife because she hath a lame foot and cannot work in his *taro* plantation. And instead of giving thee but thirty lashes as the *fakafili* ordered, he gave thee thirty and three. I saw it, for when after the tenth thou fell upon the ground, I counted. Salomé, thou art foolish. See, take this crucifix of mine and hold it in thy hand, and come with me to the village, and say that thou wilt abjure thy false *lotu*, and then

\* Bishop.

† The religion of Britain—any form of Protestantism.

all will be well with thee, and no more shalt thou be beaten."

Salomé shrunk away from him with outstretched hands. "Maru! Maru! touch me not with it. Let me be beaten and stoned, and pelted with gravel, and called, 'Salomé the Shameless,' 'Salomé the Heretic,' 'Salomé the Outcast,' 'Salomé the Heathen.' I can die as my uncle and my mother died when we came here, and the *leo leo*\* beat them to death because they were *lotu Peretania*, and would not become Katoliko."

The boy threw his arms around her—"Nay, Salomé, I, Maru, will protect thee. For I, too, have been beaten because, when thou wert lying prone in the pig-pen of Kalaua, I lifted thy head and gave thee water. My own father beat me with a canoe paddle. And now it is to my mind that thou and I should flee to Samoa, where I can be tattooed, and made a man."

\* \* \* \* \*

Old Padre Grandseigne was walking slowly up and down the verandah of the mission house, thoughtfully stroking his long, snow-white beard, when he heard the gate of his garden opened, and Peter Buckley, the one white trader on the island, entered and bade him good-morning. The old man's kindly face lit up.

"Good morning, Peter," he said in English, "I am glad to see you, for I am much troubled in my mind, and was about to go to your house, as the storm has now ceased. Come inside."

The trader, a short, stout little man of past fifty, followed him into the sitting-room and sat down.

"This is a bad business, padre," he said bluntly, "and in a measure *you* are responsible for what has happened. Now, I am a good Catholic, as you know,

\* Policemen—lit, "those who guard." A Samoan term introduced throughout the equatorial and north-western islands of the Pacific.

but I am also an Irishman, and my blood boils that these crimes should be committed. Just think of it! Three Samoans—a man, woman and a child of tender years—are blown away from Upolu,\* hundreds of miles from here. They, after fearful sufferings at sea for eleven days in a small canoe, land here on this island among alleged Christians—people speaking almost the same language and with the same customs."

He paused, and the venerable padre bent his head.

"They are received hospitably, housed, clothed and fed by you, myself, and the people generally, and then, when they have sufficiently recovered, they are called upon to abjure the *lotu Peretania*, or suffer heavy punishment."

"It was against my wish, Peter," said the priest mournfully. "God knows that I tried to protect them. But I am an old, old man—I am eighty-one—and I am powerless to prevent this persecution and bigotry. The native deacons are too strong for me, and I am but a cypher now among the people to whom I, with the sainted Chanele, brought Christ to them fifty years ago."† Tears dropped from his eyes as he spoke.

The trader went on, speaking slowly and sternly, as he took from his pocket an addressed envelope.

"I have here, father, a letter to the Governor of New Caledonia, relating all that has occurred; but, before I send it away by the next ship that calls, I wish you to read it and tell me if there is anything in it that is not absolutely correct. This island is French territory, and I have asked his Excellency to consider the advisability of sending a man-of-war here, and appointing a resident magistrate to revise the present laws, which are a disgrace alike to the ignorant natives

\* One of the five islands of the Samoan Group.

† Père Chanele was murdered by the heathen natives of the island of Fotuna in 1849.

who compiled them and a blot upon our holy Church. By every vessel that touches here, three or four of our young men and women escape to Samoa or other places in order to free themselves from the increasing oppression and tyranny. In two years no less than thirty-two young men and twenty-one young women have left the island in vessels, or put to sea in frail canoes to reach Samoa or Fiji—hundreds of miles distant. In one instance a canoe party of seven young girls and two boys perished miserably of starvation. It is terrible, terrible."

The old man's hand trembled as he took the letter, and tried to decipher it through the tears which blinded his vision. Then he handed it back to Buckley—"I cannot see to read it."

"Then let me," and the trader began, and read it through from beginning to end relentlessly, only pausing when, as some additional act of persecution was tersely related, the aged priest covered his face with his hands and sobbed.

"I pain you, father."

"Heed me not, my son," replied the old man brokenly. And so Buckley went on:

"Your Excellency will be grieved to learn that since the arrival here from France of the Mother Superior and the Sisters the personal liberties of the people have been interfered with to such an extent that the younger natives take every opportunity of escaping from the island. All lights have to be extinguished one hour after sunset, or the offending parties are severely punished by the direction of the Mother Superior, who practically rules the island, and has drafted a code of laws for the regulation of the conduct of these unfortunate people that, when you read them, cannot but excite your Excellency's deepest indignation. Before the advent of these ladies, the island, under the mild and beneficent guidance of Père Grand-seigne, was in a state of high prosperity. Besides myself there were then two other traders—an American negro of the most respectable character, and an Englishman. Both of these men



were married, had large families, but being Protestants were forced to leave the island for Samoa, owing to the orders of the Mother Superior, who forbade any person, under the penalty of a heavy fine, from either buying from or selling to them. Having no land of their own, they were consequently reduced to the cruel condition of either leaving the island, or starving—for no native dared supply them with food. The Mother Superior, when I expostulated strongly, informed me that I should not complain, as the expulsion of these two traders would tend to fill my own pockets! Your Excellency can imagine how any man's humanity revolts at the suggestion of the idea of making money through the misfortunes and sufferings of another person.

"But now I must pain your Excellency by the narration of a most tragic event, which occurred only a few months ago. A party of three Samoans—a man, woman and child—were blown away in a frail canoe from their own country to this fertile island. Treated at first with the greatest kindness, they were, after their recovery from the hardships they had undergone, subjected to the most brutal and inhuman treatment by the so-called 'police'—creatures who were called into existence by the Mother Superior. Refusing to renounce their religion—which is some form of the multitudinous phases of the Protestant belief—the man and woman were beaten daily for eight days. In all they received 300 lashes each, administered with such savage fury that on the ninth day the woman succumbed to her injuries. The man—who was her brother—died on the following day.

"The child—a very intelligent girl of eleven years of age—was then subjected to the most merciless persecution. She has been beaten, stoned, and starved, for refusing to renounce the religious belief of her people.

"Yesterday this unfortunate child was seized by the 'police,' tried by a so-called judge—an ignorant native appointed by the Mother Superior—and sentenced to receive thirty lashes in the public square. Before the sentence was carried out the child was clothed in a long garment of white calico, on which were written in the native language, 'Salomé the Heretic,' 'Salomé the Shameless,' and other opprobrious terms, and dragged into the village square by a number of women and children. Here she was flogged. After about a dozen lashes she fainted—the rest were inflicted as she lay unconscious upon the ground.

"Then she was thrown into a pig-pen to recover or die!

"I implore your Excellency to remedy this terrible condition of affairs. I assure you that the state of persecution and

surveillance that prevails on this island is such that one might imagine it to be a penal colony with the nuns as *juges d'instruction*. Your Excellency's reputation for humanity encourages me to believe that you have only to know of these things for an immediate and salutary change to be made."

There was silence for a minute. Then the old priest sighed heavily.

"It is all too true. And although my heart aches to know it, I feel that I am too old and too utterly powerless now to try to bring back the old order of things. Send the letter, my friend. I shall also write to the Governor and inform him of the truth of that which you assert. The deaths of these poor people may have terrible results when the news reaches Samoa. The Samoans are a warlike race, and nothing would please them more than to make a descent upon this island, and wreak vengeance upon the entire population."

"Precisely, father. That is what I yesterday told the chiefs in the council house. A war party of two hundred Samoans would simply wipe the two thousand natives on this island out of existence. Now, father, I must go. Maru, your protégé, has gone in search of Salomé, and I am anxious to know if he has found her."

"Let me come with you! Poor child, I shall take some liniment and lint to dress her wounds."

"As you will, father. But she comes to my house, and if the police attempt to enter it to perpetrate any further violence I will hurt badly the first man, chief or commoner, who dares to lay a hand upon her."

\* \* \* \* \*

For two hours the good old man and the hot-tempered Irishman sought the boy and girl without success. Then the priest returned to the mission

house, and the trader continued the search, aided by his children. At dusk they gave up further effort, feeling certain that the girl had taken refuge in the dense jungle of the interior of the island. When they returned to the trader's house they found Maru awaiting them, and he and Buckley went into the store-room and talked together in whispered tones.

At midnight the boy left the white man's house, laden with two weighty baskets containing tinned provisions, and next morning Vākā, his father, was informed that his best bonito canoe had disappeared.

Buckley, with his telescope, was on the highest point of the island, scanning the now placid ocean, ruffled only by a steady westerly breeze. Nothing was in sight.

"They must be forty miles away by now, and with this westerly weather ought to reach Samoa in three days. Faith, it'll be a bit of a jar for the Holy Mother."

\* \* \* \* \*

And not for ten years was Maru seen on Onā Island. When he returned it was only to pay a visit to his father and his good friend Peter the trader, and plant a border of dracaena plants around the grave of Padre Grandseigne.

Then he went to see the resident Governor, who besought him to remain in the island, and assume the chieftainship of his father Vākā, who was an old man and desired his return.

"Monsieur, I am now a Samoan. I am tattooed as becomes a man, and my wife Salomé and I are now great people. We have many servants, and land has been given to us, and we dwell in happiness and peace. And although I am not of the *lotu Peretania*, I have no desire to return to live on Onā, though matters are

changed now, and the Government of France has stopped the wickedness of the past times, when my wife Salomé was cast into a pig-pen to die. In Samoa there is no persecution, by reason of the many faiths there, and Catholics and Protestants, and even the heathen savages who work on the cotton plantations, live together in peace; for in Samoa the arm of the law is strong. And I have no desire to leave such a fair country."

## "KATAFA," the FRIGATE BIRD

### A STRANGE LETTER-CARRIER

THE "frigate" is the swiftest of all sea-birds, and in some of the equatorial isles of the Pacific is used as a letter-carrier. Taken from the nest before it can fly, it is hand-fed on a fish diet by the natives, and in the course of a few months becomes so tame that it can be liberated during the day and will return to its perch at sunset. In the records of the London Missionary Society mention is made of the letter-carrying frigate birds of the Ellice Group (N.W. of Samoa), and I had frequent opportunities of witnessing their performances.

It is the practice of the natives (or was up to ten years ago) to exchange the birds after they had been tamed. For instance, the Samoan pastors of the islands of Nanomea, Nanomaga and Nuitao—sixty to eighty miles apart—all kept two or three birds each, and frequently used them to communicate with each other. On Nanomaga, where I lived for twelve months, I had two "frigates," which were given me by a trader on Nuitao, sixty miles to windward, and in return I gave him two splendid and very tame birds, hatched and reared on Nanomaga. The four were continually flying across from one island to the other; sometimes the Nuitao pair would visit their birthplace and foregather with my couple on their perch outside my house, and remain one or two days, fishing on their own account together, and being fed at dawn and nightfall by the natives and myself. Then all four would sail

off to Nuitao, my pair usually returning within twenty-four to thirty-six hours.

To test the speed of these birds I once, in June, 1882, sent one of mine to Nuitao by the barque *Redcoat* in care of the captain, who kept it in the cabin. It fretted greatly during the forty-eight hours the vessel was beating up to Nuitao against the S.E. trades, refused food, and evidently was pining for its mate (they were male and female birds). The *Redcoat* arrived at Nuitao at four o'clock in the afternoon, and at half-past four the trader there, John O'Brien, after writing a few lines to me and rolling it in a small square of oilskin, tied it to the bird and cast it loose from the vessel's deck. It was out of sight in a few seconds, flying shorewards to the tree on which O'Brien's birds perched at night, and found that they were "not at home." The trader's children said that it refused to eat some fish they threw up to it, and, after resting a minute or two, and distending its curious, pendulous and scarlet-hued throat-pouch to its fullest extent and then letting it collapse, suddenly soared aloft and vanished.

The Samoan pastor of Nanomaga, a number of natives and I had been keeping a keen look-out for the return of the bird. We could only guess at the time when the *Redcoat* would arrive at Nuitao, but imagined it would be at least sixty hours, on account of the strong westerly current (Nuitao lies east of Nanomaga). But before six o'clock on the day that O'Brien had liberated my bird it was settled on its perch at home, accompanied by O'Brien's couple, which it had evidently met *en route*. All three birds were heavily gorged with flying-fish, and allowed themselves to be caught and brought into the house, where I detached O'Brien's note from my messenger.

The late Sir George Grey told me that he knew of



many authentic cases in which the *Katafa*—as the Malayo-Polynesians call the frigate bird—had accomplished over sixty miles an hour. And I have very often seen them seize a flying-fish when it (the fish) was on the wing and only a few inches above the surface of the sea.

In the Gilbert and Kingsmill Groups (commonly called the "Line Islands" from their equatorial position) frigate birds are more plentiful than they are in any other islands of Polynesia and Micronesia, but the natives have neither the intelligence nor the patience of their neighbours, the Ellice Islanders, to give time to the training of pets of any sort, and it is very rarely that one will see a tame "frigate" on the Line Islands, unless at the house of a trader who has a Samoan or Ellice Island wife. On the lagoon island of Butaritari, however, the natives had been taught to train the birds by some strangers from the Tokelaus (Union Group), and my partner and I were given a young male and a female bird, which remained with us for nearly twelve months, fishing in either the lagoon or far away on the ocean at early morning and in the afternoon, and always returning to their perch at dusk. This perch was a gaunt and scanty-foliaged pandanus tree (screw-pine), and during the hottest part of the day the two noble-looking creatures would stand erect and motionless for hours on a branch, with their wide wings outspread, and their glossy plumage glinting in the sun.

Last year there appeared in many English newspapers an account of an old fisherman, who, fishing in Cruden Bay, hooked at a depth of sixty feet a Great Northern diver, which shot up from the water with the hook (and a small whiting) embedded in its stomach, and savagely attacked the fisherman, who received severe wounds in his face before he succeeded

in killing the bird with a boat-stretcher. Many people would, no doubt, regard this as a "fish story," but it is absolutely true, and the Cruden Bay fisherman is by no means the first man who has had a similar adventure.

Years ago I remember reading a work by—I think—John Burroughs, the American naturalist, in which he states that it was not an infrequent occurrence for fishermen on the deep lakes in the New England woods to have their baited hooks seized by loons at a depth of sixty feet and over, and that the birds would attack their captors most savagely.

The frigate bird is also caught (intentionally) with the hook and line in some of the Pacific Islands. The *modus operandi* is a very simple one. A long line baited with a small flying-fish is trailed from a canoe under sail, and if there are any *katafa* (frigate birds) about, hovering in or sweeping through the air high above, their keen eyes soon discern the silvery gleam of the fish far below. There is a lightning-like swoop, and then a hoarse croak of rage as the bird finds itself hooked, and opening out its feet, and outspreading its noble wings, it "backs water," and is only hauled in with difficulty. The moment it is alongside a cinnet noose is slipped over the long gaping mandibles, then the legs are tied, and the wings lashed firmly to its body, and the once monarch of the air is taught subjection by a slow and cruel process of starvation.

Another sea-bird which is often caught on the line in southern seas is the common penguin. About ten years ago I was in the Sydney whaling steamer, *Jenny Lind*, cruising for "humpbacks," and one day anchored under the lee of Montagu Island for shelter. In the morning one of our crew showed me a penguin in a box, and told me that he had caught it while fishing on the bottom for rock "flathead." (We were

anchored in fifteen fathoms.) I was inclined to think that he was having a joke at my expense, and said so. However, in the course of the day, the head light-keeper of Montagu Island Lighthouse told me that very often he and his mates, when schnapper-fishing off the island, had hooked penguins.

*Apropos* of penguins, I may mention that it is not at all uncommon for the burrow of the bird to be shared with the deadly black snake, which is so plentiful on many of the islands in Bass's Straits. The aboriginal blacks, when they raid some of the islands off the New South Wales coast in the vicinity of Wreck Bay for penguin eggs, can always tell by certain signs when a burrow is tenanted by a snake as well as a bird, and leave those particular burrows alone. I believe that in North America the prairie dog often shares his subterranean home with the rattlesnake—he, like the penguin, is, no doubt, a "passive resister."

A few words more concerning my friend the *Katafa*:

Audubon, the American ornithologist, whose works I have never been fortunate enough to read, is, I believe, the one man who has studied the habits of, and written fully upon, this bird monarch of the air.

## JAGER, THE CAT

A DANISH brig, the *Jäger*, ran ashore on the reef of Butaritari (Gilbert Islands), in the North Pacific, and her skipper and his crew, taking to the boats, landed at the trading station of my partner (an ex-ship carpenter named MacBride) and myself. The Danes expected to be killed and eaten by savages, instead of which they were cossetted up and given much Christian refreshment in the way of Bourbon whisky and home-made bread, cooked by MacBride's half-caste wife. There was an Auckland schooner named the *Coronet* lying in the lagoon at the time, and the Danish skipper made arrangements for passages for himself and crew to New Zealand, and sold the *Jäger* to MacBride and myself for 500 dollars.

"There's a fine cat on board," he said, as he bade us good-bye, "we couldn't find him when we left the ship. He got away somewhere below."

We found the cat. He was lying in the skipper's bunk, sound asleep, and was the biggest, longest, ugliest and fiercest yellow Tom I ever saw. He had a head like a bulldog, and jaws set with teeth like a tiger, and after we had satisfied his hunger by giving him the contents of a whole tin of condensed milk, he followed us on deck, and watched the salving operations with a lazy and contented interest, sitting on the top of the deck-house and placidly cleaning his chops with his huge paws.

We named him *Jäger*, after the brig, and in a week he became notorious. He seemed fond of live fowls, and liked Muscovy ducks. In three days he killed

five of Mrs MacBride's hens, two ducks and a guinea fowl, and the natives swore that he had also destroyed several pigs. He never ate any of his victims; he simply killed them and then, in a lazy, indifferent sort of manner, carried the corpses into the boat-house, regarded them in an abstracted sort of manner for a little while, and then went to sleep.

MacBride and I had two tame frigate birds, which we had taken from the nest and brought up by hand. They "made friends" with Jäger, who never attempted to hurt them after one of the twins had snipped out a piece of his left ear one day when he foolishly regarded the bird as ordinary fowl, and tried to pounce upon it.

The frigate birds had a perch on a pandanus palm, which grew just outside the boat-shed. Here they would sometimes stand for hours enjoying their sun bath, and then if no fish were thrown to them they would do an hour's fishing in the lagoon "on their own." But they were always ready for more food at any time of the day, and Jäger would sit and watch, with an angry glint in his green eyes, Nita MacBride tossing them small mullet, which they caught with a lightning-like movement of the head marvellous to witness. Then to annoy Jäger she would take a larger fish by the tail, dangle it temptingly before him, and then toss it high above.

"There you are, Jäger—catch it when it falls."

And then in the tenth of a second there would come a swift rush of wings cleaving the air, and, ere you could count two, one of the great and noble-looking birds would be back on the perch beside his mate with the fish held crosswise in the long, curved bill. A quick jerk of the head, and up the fish would go, to fall head-on into the gaping mandibles; a sharp snap, and all was over. Jäger, sweeping his tail angrily to

and fro, would glare with concentrated fury at the fierce-eyed, glossy-plumaged birds, who every now and then, as if to annoy him, would inflate their curious scarlet-hued and pendulous throat-bags (the purposes of which have always been a puzzle to ornithologists), and, spreading out their magnificent wings, stare up at the sky.

"The twa deevils pretend they're leecterns," Mac-Bride would say.

Poor Jäger had a sad experience one day. I was going out fishing for *palu*—a huge species of *Ruvettus* very common in the Equatorial Pacific—and had prepared and baited my line of 100 fathoms, and laid it down upon the outrigger platform of my fishing canoe, which was lying on the beach. Jäger sauntered down to see what was going on, looking more like a young leopard than a Christian Tom cat, and I went back to the house for a box of matches. Hardly had I reached the door when I heard children's screams and many voices shouting out something about *te puhi* (the cat). Turning back I saw Jäger tearing towards the house with my fishing line trailing after him, executing the most extraordinary gyrations, leaps and bounds, and emitting the most horrifying yells of agony and cat-curses. He had hooked himself! It was quite 300 yards from the canoe to the house, and Jäger was doing it at 20 knots, when the line fouled a dead coconut branch, or some other obstacle, and brought him up standing.

We rushed to his assistance, and, at imminent danger to ourselves, threw ourselves upon the cursing, spitting creature, and I cut off the hook and dragged it through the roof of his mouth. Then, with an agonised yowl, he fled straight across the island to an arrowroot plantation, where he remained in retreat for several days.



Poor Jäger! He came to a sudden end—through too much savagery. A native, throwing down young coconuts from a very lofty tree, dislodged a large rat, which fell to the ground. Jäger sprang upon and seized it, and as he was proudly swishing his tail to and from a coconut fell upon him and broke his back.

## “DALEY,” OF DRUMMOND’S ISLAND

HE had many names—he needed them—but I shall call him Daley, by which name he was known to me and other traders in the North and South Pacific nearly thirty years ago. At that time he was, though past fifty, one of the toughest, strongest, and most active man I ever saw; of medium height, clean-shaven, close-cropped, and dressed usually in pyjamas, and no one would have imagined that Peter Daley was anything more than what he professed to be—a simple trader, who was then, as he had been in the past, much in demand as a pilot all over the South Seas.

Yet he had been many things—sailor in the Navy, convict in Van Diemen’s Land—as Tasmania was then usually called—“English gentleman” in Chile, then a trader, was the first white man to traverse the great island of New Britain, and was tried for his life for being concerned in the murder of a number of coolies he was taking from Macao to Callao, but succeeded in escaping from prison.

My acquaintance with him began at Drummond’s Island (Taputeauea) in the Gilbert Group. Our vessel was anchored off Utiroa village when there came on board a quiet-spoken, clean-shaven man, who inquired if I could sell him some copper boat-nails and rivets. I supplied him with what he wanted, and he asked me if I would care to look at a whaleboat he had built, and which was for sale, and also at another not yet completed. That afternoon I went ashore and called at his house. The yard outside was thronged with noisy, ferocious natives, who, however, the moment

Daley appeared at the doorway, subsided into a curiously respectful silence and walked silently after us as he led the way to his boat-shed.

The finished whaleboat pleased me greatly, and I bought it from him for \$225—the price he asked. He at once had it launched and manned by some of his savage retinue, and sent it off to the ship, telling me that I could pay him on the morrow. Returning to his house we chatted for half-an-hour over a couple of glasses of grog, and I said good-day, as I had some business to transact with the three other traders who lived in Utiroa, and who, to my surprise, had not boarded us the moment we had cast anchor, as they had done on other occasions.

I found all three at the house of one of them—a man named Gable, who was noted as a "tough" of the first water. His face was one mass of contusions and bruises, and as he growled out a welcome to me, I noticed that the brace of revolvers he habitually carried buckled round his waist were absent.

Taking a seat I asked him what was the matter—why they all looked so "glum." After some hesitation, one of them, a decent Portuguese known as "George," told me what had happened.

Daley, it appeared, had arrived at the island seven months previously to start business as a trader. He was accompanied by six natives of Naura (Pleasant Island); and the three other traders, the moment he put foot on the beach, met him and bluntly requested him to return to the ship, as "there was no room for a fourth man on the island." He refused, and in a few moments a serious quarrel occurred. The traders, aided by a number of their followers, tried to hustle the new-comer and his men back into the boat, when a somewhat influential head man of Utiroa, who wanted a white man for *his* particular part of the great

village, came to Daley's assistance. He was followed by a score or so of his people, all armed with muskets, sharks' teeth swords, etc., and then someone fired a shot and one of Daley's men fell dead. Daley at once drew his revolver, and wounded both Gable and another man named Crowe, and then the firing became general, although the Portuguese and Bakwā (the head man before-mentioned) tried to stop the encounter. But Daley and his savage Pleasant Islanders (who were armed with Vetterli rifles) were maddened at the death of their comrade, and in ten minutes the three traders and their retainers were beaten back and bolted, leaving four dead and several wounded behind them, whilst Daley lost two men killed, and he himself was wounded by a knife thrust, which, however, did not prevent him from hastening back to the ship and returning with an additional supply of arms and ammunition. Within a week he was installed in a new house which Bakwā had built for him, and was buying oil not only from Bakwā's people, but from the very natives who had sought to prevent his landing.

"And since then," said Crowe, interrupting the Portuguese in his story, "we've had a dog's time of it. He fairly bosses the whole island, and we've had no choice but to knuckle under to him. I tell you, Mr Supercargo, he thinks no more of killing a man than Gable here does of giving one of his natives a welt on the head. We've tried to make it up with him this six months, but he won't have no truck with us. Why, he won't let us even board a ship until he has been off first, and had his pick of the trade room."

I expressed my astonishment that one man could prevent three from pursuing their legitimate business.

"Ah, you don't know him! He's more of a devil than a man, and even our own natives who have stood to us for years won't lift a finger against him, and

none of us is doing half the business he did seven months ago."

I suggested that it was largely their own fault in attacking him in the first place; to this the Portuguese assented, and asked me if the captain and I would try and bring about a reconciliation. I promised I would speak to the skipper. Then I ventured to ask the ruffian Gable what was the matter with his face. After a preliminary but lengthened outburst of profanity, I gathered from him that a week previously a German trading brig had anchored off the village whilst Daley was absent at another part of the island, and Gable, taking advantage of this, slipped off in his boat and bought all the trade he wanted. When he returned he found Daley waiting for him on the beach, and was given the option of fighting him or being shot dead. He naturally chose the former alternative, and quite believed that he was the better man of the two. Half-an-hour later he was carried in an unconscious state to his house. Daley went with him, and found there Crowe and George.

"There is your mate," he said mockingly to them. "He'll need nursing a bit. It is lucky that you two did not go with him." Then his manner changed suddenly: "But if you want to go on board that ship you can do so now if you like, and buy what you want."

"That was very kind of him," I said; "are you going to ask his permission to come on board *my* ship—oh, but I forgot!—you are free to come since he has already been on board."

The men looked very sheepish, but I could see that they were thoroughly cowed, so I refrained from hurting their feelings any further and bade them good-day. Crowe came part of the way with me.

"I suppose you think we are a pack of miserable

curs," he said, "but that fellow isn't a man at all,—he's a devil in the shape of a human being, and although I'm no coward I feel a shiver down my back when he looks at me with those awful eyes of his. Haven't you noticed them?"

"Can't say I thought there was anything out of the common with his eyes, except that they are very deep set and hard looking."

Crowe shuddered. "Ah, there's something in them. . . . I don't know what it is . . . anyway, I'm going to leave here to get away from him. Will you take me and my belongings up to the North-West and land me somewhere in the Marshall or Caroline Islands?"

"Just as you please," I replied, wondering that such an intelligent man could manifest such unreasoning fear of the stranger.

In the morning Daley came on board. He was accompanied by his wife, who was either a Mexican or Chilian, or perhaps a Cuban. She was a rather handsome, quiet woman of about thirty, and wore the usual South American mantilla. I paid him for the boat and sold him some provisions, and asked him and his wife to stay to breakfast. During the meal he talked very freely about Island matters generally, asked the captain and me the latest European news, but said nothing about himself, nor did he even allude to the other three traders. He gave us the impression of being a well-educated and much-travelled man, grave and very self-contained. His wife apparently did not understand or speak English, and conversed with the captain in Spanish. Once, as I looked at her, I was struck with the look of intense sadness in her dark eyes, and felt sure that she was not a happy woman. After breakfast Daley asked me if I would undertake to send £100 to England for him, and he tendered me the money in gold.



"Yes," I replied, "but we shall not be in Sydney for another six months, and that is a long time from now."

"But you are calling at Samoa in a few weeks, and Godeffroy and Company will give you a draft on a London bank."

"Yes, if you don't mind them robbing you by paying them 15 per cent. commission—that is what they charge."

"I know that," he replied quietly, "I have had a draft from them before, and as it will save time I shall be much obliged to you if you will send this money from Samoa, and, as I want the recipient to get the whole £100, I will give you the extra money for Godeffroy's commission."

"Very well, Mr Daley, but it is an expensive way of transmitting money."

He smiled, but said nothing, and then, sitting down at my table, wrote the address of the person to whom the draft was to be forwarded, and made payable—Mrs H——, near Barcombe Mills, Sussex, England.

"I know that Godeffroy's will forward the draft all right," he said, "but Mrs H—— is a very old woman, and for all I know may now be dead. Is there any way you could suggest by which I could learn at some time in the future if she has cashed the draft."

"Yes, I can write to our London agents from Samoa. The manager is a personal friend of mine, and will write or send someone to call on the lady, and ascertain if she has received the draft safely."

Something like a flush tinged his dark sun-tanned face, and his whole expression changed. "Ah," he said quickly, "and perhaps your friend would, if Mrs H—— is alive, ask her to write to me to your care, and some day you might be able to give me her letter."

"Certainly, if she writes to you to my care I shall

be able to give you the letter at some time, or send it to you."

"No, no, keep it. Keep it till you see me again. I intend to remain here on Drummond's Island for at least two years, and your ship will be here in another twelve months?"

"Ten—and I hope I shall bring you the letter."

"I thank you; you are conferring a great favour on me. There are reasons why I could not ask such a favour of anyone else. I am grateful, very grateful. And this is quite private?"

"Of course. I am glad to be of service to you. And now may I ask a favour in return?"

"Yes, anything that is in my power."

"It is in your power. Will you make up the quarrel you have had with Crowe and the others? Gable, I know, is a bad case, but Crowe and George the Portuguese are decent men."

"Yes, I will. I promise you. I wanted to see them all go away, but I will do as you wish."

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Nearly a year had passed before I saw him again, when I had the satisfaction of handing him a letter, together with an acknowledgment of the receipt of the money. Later on he told me that Mrs H—— was his mother, and he added frankly that England was a country barred to him. That evening he and the other traders had dinner on board, and I was glad to see that they were now on quite friendly terms with each other. Daley's wife, I was sorry to hear, was not at all well—in fact, had been ailing for months, and the captain (who had had a medical training) offered to call and see her. Daley was very grateful, and told us that she suffered greatly from most distressing headaches, and could scarcely be induced to eat enough to sustain herself. The skipper saw her, and then pre-

pared her some medicine, which, in the course of a few days, had a most beneficial effect, and before we sailed she had almost entirely recovered, and insisted upon Packenham accepting a very handsome ring as a token of her gratitude.

Three months later our vessel was at Apia in the Samoan Group, and there met the United States cruiser *Kearsage*, the famous destroyer of the *Alabama*. Lunching on board one day, Packenham mentioned that we had recently visited Drummond's Island.

"Ha," exclaimed one of the officers, "is that man Daley there? I've heard so much about him that I should like to see him."

"Yes," replied Packenham, "he is there."

"Is his wife with him? She is very pretty, is she not?"

"Yes, very. Do you know her?"

"No, but I know of her; she belongs to a very good family in Chile. In some way this man Daley acquired such an influence over her that she married him secretly, and a few weeks later they both disappeared. It was then ascertained that he was to have been arrested on the very day that he fled the country for being concerned in a desperate act of piracy committed on the coast of Peru five years before. He and half-a-dozen other men seized a small despatch vessel, on board of which was over fifteen thousand dollars. They got away safely and never left a trace. Four years later Daley came to Valdivia and bought a small estate. He was not suspected of being anything else but an English gentleman, and lived very quietly, but one day he was recognised by the captain of the despatch vessel, and again left in a hurry. He's a mighty hard case, I can tell you."

"Well," I said, "to speak to he is one of the

quietest, most unassuming men I ever met. Still, I do happen to know that he is a tough customer."

In the following year we again visited Drummond's Island, and found that Daley had left and gone off somewhere to the North-West Pacific, and we never saw him again.

## A TRANSFORMATION

IN the Gilbert Group and other equatorial islands of the North and South Pacific—in most cases low, narrow ribbands of sandy soil, clothed with coco-palms and enclosing lagoons of sea water—the chance visitor is sometimes surprised at being asked by the local trader if he would like some “fresh-water fish” for breakfast. For as these equatorial isles possess neither rivers, creeks nor springs, one naturally wonders from where the fresh-water fish come; yet they are to be had in plenty, and very excellent fish they are, though the numerous hair-like bones in them necessitates their being thoroughly well cooked. In appearance they are handsome, with blue and silver “marbled” backs and sides, tapering bodies and small fins and tails of a bright yellow tipped with blue, and they run up to 3 lbs. in weight. (On the island of Peru in the Gilbert Group, I have seen some taken from the ponds of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.)

When westerly winds prevail and rain falls, the work of turning salt-water fish into fresh-water fish begins, and very interesting it is to watch it from the beginning, and one cannot but admire the ingenuity and resourcefulness of these copper-skinned people, who within the last few years have become British subjects.

First of all the smaller ponds for the reception of the fry are cleaned out, all débris being removed by the women and children; this is usually done when rain is falling, so that in a few hours a pond will have been emptied of the old, partly stagnant water and a

fresh supply of rain water have run into it. Such fish that may have been in it when cleaning-out began, are then replaced or transferred to a larger and deeper pool according to their size. Then, the pools being in readiness, the women and children, carrying wooden bowls and small fine-meshed scoop nets, set out for the lagoon beaches and sandy flats, and wait for high water. As the tide recedes they step carefully into the water and scan the margin for the objects of their search—little, transparent, goggle-eyed fish, about half-an-inch in length, in shape not unlike a tadpole. Sometimes they are very scarce, at other times, especially during heavy westerly weather, they are as thick as herring fry. This, the natives say, is caused by the stormy seas outside the lagoon driving them to seek shelter along the quiet inner beaches, at the very foot of the coco-palms, whose roots are laved by the salt water. In transferring the fry to the wooden bowls—half filled with salt water—great care is taken to see that none are injured. When a sufficient number has been taken to re-stock the “nursing” ponds, the women return to the village, where the fry are thinned out from the respective bowls or transferred to larger ones in which is brackish water—*i.e.* half-sea and half-rain water. Here for some days the little strangers are carefully tended, feeding beginning in about a week, when the women pound up or masticate the flesh of the very young coconut—apparently these fish have the same tastes as the West Indian mountain mullet, which likes the soft Avocado pear—and throw it to them.

After transference to the ponds these fish increase in size very rapidly, and become very fat on their diet of coconut. It would be incorrect, however, to speak of the water in these artificial ponds as being absolutely fresh; for it is subject to the rise and fall of the tides.



At high tide it has (especially during the dry season) a brackish taste and rises some feet; at the ebb it is fresh enough to be used for drinking or cooking.

The natives value the fish very highly, and the ponds are only dragged at intervals of some months, all fish under a certain size being returned to the water. More than thirty years ago a quarrel for the possession of a large fish pond on the island of Apian led to a savage encounter—the women of one village attacking those of another with sharks' teeth swords and daggers; then the men joined in with muskets and knives, several being killed and many wounded. Nowadays the sharks' teeth spears and daggers are made only for the purpose of selling them to the white visitor; and muskets, rifles and revolvers are articles forbidden by the British Resident. But the fish cultivation goes on as usual, for, unlike their more fortunate Polynesian neighbours of Samoa and other fertile archipelagoes, the poor inhabitants of the torrid lagoon isles of the equatorial Pacific look to the ocean for most of their daily food—they have nought else but coco-nuts, the drupes of the pandanus fruit, and a coarse vegetable called *puraka*. Yet on such a limited variety of fare they thrive, and are a vigorous and healthy people.

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## SAUNDERSON AND THE DEVIL-FISH

PACKENHAM, the skipper, and Denison, the supercargo, of the *Palestine*, loathed Saunderson.

Saunderson was the junior partner of a firm owning a fleet of South Sea trading vessels, of which the *Palestine* was one, and every two years he was sent round the Islands on a tour of inspection of the various trading stations. He always picked upon the *Palestine* in which to make the cruise, and it was this that made them so hate the man.

Saunderson, in the first place, was aggressively pious, and always brought his harmonium with him, and played it in season and out of season, when the brig was at anchor; at sea he was always too ill. In the second place, none of the traders liked him—because he insisted upon their letting native teachers have whatever goods they wanted at 25 per cent. less than the “lay” natives. Thirdly, he was a fearful bore, a great intermeddler with other people’s affairs, and was always getting himself into trouble over his officiousness, and then blaming Denison; thought he knew everything under the sun, especially about the native customs and the South Seas generally, believed himself to be a proficient Polynesian linguist, owing to his having made two voyages each of three months’ duration, and was always hinting that supercargoes were not a necessity—in fact, he was, as Denison in his wrath one day told him, “a confounded, fatuous, muddling fat-head, and a nuisance to have to put up with on a trading vessel.”

Saunderson wanted the firm to sack Denison for

this, but the senior partner wouldn't have it, for Denison was too valuable a man to lose; but the firm wrote him a formal letter, and asked him to apologise to Mr Saunderson in writing. He replied by post, and registered the letter.

"DEAR SIRS,

"I am in receipt of yours of even date requesting me to send a written apology to Mr Alexander Saunderson. I beg respectfully to inform you, in reply thereto, that I will see Mr Alexander Saunderson" (here I must omit a word) "before I send him an apology.

"Yours obediently,

"THOMAS DENISON,

"Supercargo, brig *Palestine*."

Then the matter dropped, and Saunderson one day came on board in Sydney to make his third trip, bringing with him his harmonium. He shook hands with Denison, and said he hoped that they would get on better together this time. He was a forgiving sort of idiot, and to show that he bore Denison no ill-will, gave him a book called "Daily Thoughts for Daily Needs"—eminently suitable for a rum-and-gin-selling supercargo in the South Sea trade. The supercargo said he was touched, and would read the book on Sundays.

"And look here, Saunderson," he added, "we ought to get on very well together, but you are such a blundering ass, and think you know more than anyone else. Now I have been fifteen years supercargoeing all over the Pacific, and you can't teach me my business. And you ought to remember that I saved you from being murdered by Commander Muddle, of the *Badger*, when you let a dynamite cartridge drift alongside his ship and nearly blew her up. Heavens! I shall never forget the awful bang, and the fearful oaths Muddle used when he knocked you over the

wharf into the water. I told you that you would have an accident, but you wouldn't listen to me, as usual, and so nearly sank one of Her Majesty's gunboats. Now, didn't you?"

Saunderson's fat face twitched and he shuddered. He could never forget that awful day.

"Then you are always interfering with me and the natives, instead of minding your own business, which is to overhaul the traders' books. You think you can speak Samoan and Tahitian and Fijian, but you only know enough to make a blazing fool of yourself, and say things to the chiefs and their women-folk that are fearfully insulting, and make the women bolt."

Saunderson protested. He only wanted to be polite, he said.

"Ah, just so, but you do just the other thing, and then the women go and tell the missionaries of the awful things you say to them. In fact, you have a fearful name in some of the islands."

Saunderson looked incredulous, but Denison went on summing up, and in a few minutes Saunderson's self-assertion gave way, and he promised to be careful in future.

"Then there is another thing you've done which is losing the firm a lot of money and turned the traders against you to a man—and some of 'em are very religious men, although they don't show it."

Saunderson's dignity was hurt this time—"I try to save money for the firm, not lose it," he said, with lofty asperity. "Please explain."

"Why, the idiotic rule you have enforced by which all our traders must sell any of their goods to the native teachers at 25 per cent. less than to the rest of the people. Now, Saunderson, I know you are a religious man, and would not lend yourself to anything improper, and although you and I have often

quarrelled, I have a great respect for you as a Christian. You must rescind that rule, which is demoralising to the native teachers in particular, and the other natives in general, and has made three of our traders—Maccabe, Oliphant and Black Sam—take to drink, beat their wives and children, and behave scandalously, and if I were you I should feel that I had done a very wicked thing. For every blow those men inflict on their poor wives, for every time they get drunk, for all the fearful things they see in the horrid visions of *delirium tremens*, you, Saunderson, are responsible.”

Saunderson opened his mouth in astonishment, and Denison went on—

“You see, native teachers are not saints, though they do their best to look like ’em. Now this is what has happened since you made your precious rule—any native who wants to buy anything from the trader goes to the native teacher, and gets a written order from him, planks it down, and the poor, struggling trader has to let him have what he wants at 25 per cent. less than the proper price. See! It is all your doing, Saunderson—it’s encouraging dishonesty, lying, drunkenness, and general immorality, and——”

“I’ll stop it,” said Saunderson hastily, and he there and then wrote out forty-two notices to forty-two individual men, cancelling the rule whereby the smug teachers obtained their goods cheaply from the exasperated traders.

Denison went on deck and told Pakenham of the good work he had done, and Pakenham nodded approval as he chewed his cigar.

“I think, Pack,” said the supercargo, “that we won’t have so much trouble with him this time. I have descended to low flattery whilst I was impressing upon him what a thundering ass he is. And I’ve

told the steward to watch his chance and smear some butter over the internal and infernal anatomy of that cursed harmonium. In two days there will be swarms of cockroaches inside the beastly thing, and in a week it will be done for, and only fit for a packing case."

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Saunderson behaved very well for the next two weeks. He was employed in trying to repair the harmonium, which the cockroaches had devastated; and Denison, to show his sympathy, made phosphorus paste to destroy the vermin, and helped Saunderson to paint the interior of the instrument with it, well knowing it would never groan out its dismal tunes any more.

Then one day Saunderson borrowed an accordion from a native sailor, and found that it suited his voice "for sacred music," and the *Palestine* became a floating hell of discord—instrumentally and socially, for Denison and Pakenham made things unpleasant for the crew, and the mate complained of being deprived of his sleep by Saunderson's "music" when it was his watch below. And then Denison and Saunderson again quarrelled, and the former said that if a bloody mutiny occurred it would be caused by Saunderson and his accursed accordion and his harrowing hymns, and that the mate was a dangerous man with lunacy in his family.

Saunderson became his old, offensively pompous self again, and inquired if Denison understood their relative positions. Immediately after supper he brought out his accordion, and began to sing "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," and Denison left the cabin, went for'ard, and returned with "Jack," the ship's dog, a huge Newfoundland, which always howled so dismally at music of any kind that Pakenham would



not allow the native seamen to play upon anything but Jews' harps. Denison tied the dog up beside the open skylight, and in three minutes Saunderson's vocal and instrumental efforts were drowned in Jack's agonised howls and weird, awful groans. Then Saunderson stopped and went to bed.

"We have the bulge on him now," said Denison to the mate. "Whenever he touches that infernal accordion, I'll bring the other vocalist and tie him up."

One day the *Palestine* reached Apian Island, in the Gilbert Group, and, on account of it falling a dead calm, anchored off the entrance to the lagoon. Just inside the passage was the American mission ship *Morning Star*, also at anchor, and with a lot of missionaries and their wives on board. Saunderson at once went off to her and stayed to dinner with the reverend gentlemen. He returned babbling about the *Morning Star* being an ideally "happy ship"—the captain and officers were so kind and gentle to the crew, etc., etc. Then he informed Denison with a triumphant look that he had bought another harmonium! It was destined for a mission station, but Saunderson had begged so hard to buy it that the boss missionary consented, especially as there were several others on board, all intended for various mission houses. So Saunderson said he would not only pay the \$100 he was asked, but would give a donation of \$25 to the mission fund. It was to be sent on board in the morning. Then he took \$125 in gold out of the ship's safe, and went off beamingly to have a little music with his new friends. He was so radiantly happy, and so ready to show that he wanted to be friends again with them, that Pakenham and Denison unbent, and all three had drinks together—Saunderson taking ginger ale.

"This is a pretty 'do,'" said Denison gloomily to the skipper after Saunderson had gone.

"But we have the dog," said Pakenham thoughtfully as he pulled his grizzled moustache.

Denison brightened up.

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About three o'clock in the afternoon, one of the hands, who was aloft, saw two huge sea-rays cruising about the ship, and the mate and Denison had a tub of whale-line, a harpoon and lance tumbled into the whaleboat, and with five native seamen started off in pursuit.

Now the gigantic ray of the mid-Pacific Islands is an ugly and dangerous customer to tackle by inexperienced men, for it has a trick of suddenly leaping out of the water and descending upon a boat like a falling brick wall, destroying the craft and drowning the occupants. Sometimes it does this when a harpoon is in its back, and it is enraged; sometimes it does it out of pure, unadulterated devilry. It is a monstrous creature, sometimes twenty feet or more in width from wing to wing, and with a bony tail of ten feet in length, armed at the junction with the hideous body with a fearful, closely-serrated barb as long as a bayonet. Native canoes always give it a wide berth, but the traders occasionally kill it for the sake of the oil its liver contains. Both the mate and Denison had killed many of these "devil-fish," as they are called, and thoroughly understood how to do it.

Ten minutes after leaving the ship they came within striking distance of one of the monsters, which was cruising to and fro in the passage, and the mate hove his iron into the creature's back. It at once "sounded" (dived) and made off at a terrific rate seaward, dragging the boat with oars apeak after it. In a few minutes it burst upward again, and then leapt clean out of the water, falling back with a mighty splash;

but the whale-line had been eased off the moment the great bull-like head appeared, and though the long snaky tail swept round and round with savage fury it could not tear out the harpoon.

"We've got him now, Meredith," said Denison, "but let him have a bit of a run before we give him the lance."

Under the awning spread over the after-deck of the *Morning Star* were the missionaries, their wives, the captain, and Saunderson, all deeply interested in the scene—the boat, with oars still apeak, flying over the calm surface of the sea, Denison aft at the steer oar, and Meredith standing up in the bows, lance in hand.

"Regular whaler style," remarked the captain of the missionary ship—himself an ex-whaler skipper.

"Oh, but it must be real dangerous," cried a pretty little lady, "is it not, Mr Saunderson?"

Saunderson smiled and shrugged his shoulders, and replied that there was nothing in it. He began to feel annoyed that his new friends were more interested in watching the scene than in himself, and mentally blamed Denison.

"Could you do it?" inquired Mrs Brooks.

"Oh, yes, I have often killed one of those brutes," he replied unblushingly, for he really had speared several skate in Loch Ryan. "If there is another one about to-morrow I'll show you how *I* do it."

Meanwhile the mate and Denison had hauled up to the big ray, and given it the *coup-de-grace* with the lance, and signalled to the *Palestine* to send a second boat to help to tow it to the brig.

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Soon after breakfast on the following morning, Packenham and Denison went on shore to see the local trader. Saunderson remained on board, for he was

waiting for the harmonium. The dead calm still prevailed, and the sun shone upon an oily, glassy sea. Meredith, the mate, was leaning over the rail, smoking his pipe, when he happened to notice the "wings" of a devil-fish flapping out of the water half a cable length away. He pointed them out to Saunderson, and remarked that it was the mate of the one that he and Denison had killed on the preceding day, and that it was seeking its missing companion.

"I think I'll go and kill the beast, Mr Meredith," said Saunderson airily; "will you mind making ready one of the boats and putting all the things into it—the harpoons and lances, and all that is wanted. Hurry up, please, as I want to be back here in time for my harmonium."

Meredith stared at him blankly, and then observed that it was a "cow" devil-fish, bereft of its mate, and very dangerous to tackle. "But of course I'll go with you, sir, and instead of putting an iron into her we'll settle her with the bomb-gun."

Saunderson at once became Alexander Saunderson, Esquire.

"Mr Meredith, prepare the boat with all the necessities. *I* am killing this devil-fish, and *I* do not require either your services or a bomb-gun. Do you understand?"

"Certainly, sir," and Meredith, with a great joy in his heart, yelled out to the deck—

"Hands to man port whaler. Line-tub, harpoon and lance. Look alive!"

In a few minutes the boat was speeding over the water towards the devil-fish, Saunderson steering, whilst one of the five native seamen bent the line on to the harpoon haft. Then the man came aft, to steer, and Saunderson went for'ard, and picked up the harpoon—a weapon he had never before handled in his

life. The five natives, however, did not know this, or they would not have gone with him. They knew that he was a fool, but never dreamt how great a one.

As he looked ahead he saw that his harmonium was being lowered into a boat alongside the missionary ship, and it was followed by six of the missionaries, whom Saunderson had invited to come on board the *Palestine*; and on the quarter-deck were a number of ladies, among whom he recognised pretty Mrs Brooks. He waved his hand to them, and there was a responding flutter of handkerchiefs. They were all looking at him. It made him feel proud.

On went the boat till within twenty fathoms of the great fish, whose huge, horny back and bull head were showing above water. It was moving very slowly through the glassy water. Saunderson stood erect, disdaining to brace himself against the knee thwart. Leaning back slightly, he poised the harpoon.

"Wait a bit, wait a bit," yelled the steersman, as he swerved the boat's head a little, "do you wan' to be killed? Don't strike until you are well abreast of de head. Ah, you (blank) fool!"

Saunderson "hove" as the man was speaking—hove the harpoon as if he were throwing a cricket ball, and the harpoon and haft as well fell flat upon the bull-like head, and rolled off, and the next instant the startled fish swung her fearful tail out of the water, caught Saunderson a blow in the abdominal region, and sent him flying over board as if he had been shot out of a catapult. And then at the same time, as he splashed into the water, the line began to run out at lightning speed, for the devil-fish had in some way fouled it, and was carrying it away.

The moment the steersman saw Saunderson go overboard, he sprang in after him, and succeeded in getting hold of the man, who was half-full of salt water. And



away went the boat, for when the steersman jumped to save Saunderson, the line in some way slipped off the loggerhead, and in two minutes the whole 120 fathoms had whizzed out through the stem notch.

Whilst the rest of the boat's crew were engaged in picking up the bulky figure of the unconscious Saunderson, the devil-fish was making a furious course across the lagoon, every now and then leaping out of the water, and bending herself into weird curves in her frantic efforts to clear herself of the whale-line and the harpoon which was banging her tail. No doubt her passions were aroused, and when her great goggle eyes discerned right ahead of her a boat-load of people, the creature went for it with righteous indignation and deadly intent. Folding her great bat-like wings under her body, she humped herself into the shape of an outspread, but submerged umbrella, and then, with a torrent of foam pouring from all round her, she leapt into the air, flattened out, and fell with a sickening crash upon the boat-load of missionaries and Saunderson's harmonium. Then, still dragging the line, she made off to the sea, feeling she had done her duty and got even with the people who had killed her husband and insulted herself.

By the time the missionaries and their boat's crew had come to the surface, and the harmonium had gone to the bottom, and whilst the dreadful screams of the ladies on board the *Morning Star* were resounding across the lagoon, Saunderson's boat had come to the rescue, and saved everyone, and the reverend gentlemen—who thought that they had been struck by a thunderbolt—were taken to the missionary ship, and their injuries, which were slight, attended to.

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Saunderson couldn't attend the thanksgiving service



held on board the mission ship on the following day. He was too miserable with a fractured rib, and did not even show any grief when Denison told him that his harmonium was at the bottom of the lagoon.

"And by rights, Saunderson," said Denison, kindly but firmly, "you ought to be there with it. It is certainly true that Providence spares the innocent infant, the drunken man, and the idiot. Now here is your own 'Daily Thoughts for Daily Needs.' Perhaps you'll find something in it to bear you up in your knowledge that by your infernal vanity you nearly caused the deaths of six good, pious clergymen, four A.B.s, and an officer, and have lost me a whale-line and harpoon, that cost altogether £12, and, I must remind you, I am a poor man."

## THE "SOUL-SNARERS" OF MANAHIKI

A LITTLE while ago, while turning over some mementos of Manahiki Island, in the South Pacific, I came across a small circle of fine cane about two inches in diameter; from the sides towards the centre a delicate network of the fibres of some plant was constructed, leaving a small hole in the centre itself large enough for, say, a bee to crawl through. The article weighed less than a quarter of an ounce, yet, small and harmless as it appeared, it is not so very many years ago that it and others like it were objects of deadly terror to the natives of many of the Pacific Islands, particularly those of Manahiki (Humphrey Island), for the simple-looking thing was a "soul-catcher"—that is, a destroyer of human life.

Manahiki is one of a group of low-lying atoll islands to the N.E. of Samoa, and its people to-day are about the best educated of all the Malayo-Polynesian people. They elect a king and parliament, have one of the most beautifully adorned churches in the Pacific Islands, and nearly all the younger members of the community can now not only speak, but read and write English. The island is—for an atoll—unusually fertile, and the people a fine, stalwart, handsome, copper-coloured race. The main industries are the making of "copra" (dried coconut) and diving for pearl shell.

"Soul-catching" in the heathen days (prior to 1863) could be and was practised by anyone who desired revenge or the life of an enemy. Indeed, although the people were nominally Christians in 1873, it was still in vogue. The *modus operandi* is very simple: Two

men, Rika and Tetoro, quarrel. Rika accuses Tetoro of going out into the lagoon at night-time, lifting his (Rika's) fish-traps, and abstracting the contents. He, therefore, demands compensation. Tetoro denies the theft. The relatives of both men take sides, and the quarrel assumes all the elements of a feud, with bloodshed. It may be that Tetoro is a man of means, or chiefly rank and influence, and treats his accuser with scorn.

“Very well,” the injured Rika cries, “if I cannot get justice from you I shall snare your soul, and you will die of a wasting sickness.”

Tetoro, even if he is innocent, begins to feel uneasy at this threat, and, while vigorously denying the theft, offers Rika a present of a pig to end the matter. Rika's relatives now at once clamour not only for their original demands, but for the pig as well. Possibly a free fight ensues, and Rika's people get badly used, and threats of “soul-snaring” are heard on all sides.

Then Rika's wife makes the snare for Tetoro's soul. Taking her mat out into the village, or upon a well-frequented road or path, she suspends the snare from the branches of trees, or sticks placed in the ground in such a position that she can closely watch the orifice in the centre of the snare. Rika's friends—male and female—come with her. They bring food and eat it, and throw fragments immediately under the snare to attract the flies with which the island is infested. If but one fly crawls through the hole Tetoro is a dead man, unless he suddenly gives in and allows himself to be bled. For not only do Rika's people watch the snare, but his own as well. No one of them would dare attempt to destroy the thing—the death of the interferer by occult power would certainly follow.

And so for hours and hours—sometimes for days—many pairs of eyes watch the little circle of cane, and

Tetoro and his friends are now ready to yield, fearing that still more extortionate demands may be made. Then at last a fly is seen to crawl through, and a shout goes through the village.

"Ua hopo te lago! Ua hopo te lago!" ("A fly has passed through.") Tetoro hears the cries, and immediately imagines he feels ill. His wife and relatives crowd about him and try to cheer him up, but his face assumes a melancholy look, and as the time passes on he refuses his food. Perhaps he may confess that he did steal Rika's fish and tremblingly offer to make full restitution if Rika will catch a fly and make it go through the circle from the reverse side through which the first one entered voluntarily. Usually this is done, and what might have become a lasting family feud, had Tetoro died of "funk" through being bewitched, ends up by the payment of so much property to Rika, and a feast for which both parties provide the viands.

At the present time the Rikas and Tetoros of Manahiki fight their battles out in the local court, and anyone insinuating anything about the days of "soul-snaring" would be looked upon as a very ill-mannered, presumptuous person.

## “YACOB” AND “PIG”

[Elsewhere in this volume I have told the story of my lamented seafaring cat “Jäger,” who was big, ugly and fierce. “Yācob” was a second feline wanderer who crept into my affections when I was a long, long cry from the South Seas. He was as beautiful and as gentle as Jäger was the reverse.]

ONCE, when I was swollen up with vanity, I had a dissension with my employers as to my merits as a supercargo, and when the ship reached port I threw up my berth at £35 per month to raise poultry at a place called Narrabeen, to the northward of Sydney. I bought an incubator on the time-payment system, and felt certain that in five years I should be pretty well off, and need never go to sea any more in cockroach-infested trading vessels, and be bullyragged by the owners for not keeping on pleasant terms with the passengers and missionaries—both classes of people who are always most objectionable to any self-respecting supercargo cast upon the South Seas to earn his living by the sweat of his brow and his abilities to make money for his firm out of the native potentates. The passengers always want to know too much, and the missionaries *do* know too much, about things that should not concern them, and write silly letters to the Press about extortionate trading captains and supercargoes, and yet come on board with smiling faces, and want to buy things at cost price, and ask the captain not to let his crew upset the morality of the pious natives. Now my experience of the saved Kanaka was

that he (and especially "she") generally corrupted the crew; but let it pass—I am writing about ducks and things, not missionaries nor Kanakas.

The place where I decided to make my fortune (it was my second attempt at the thing) was an estate of 500 acres of bush land overlooking the Pacific. It belonged to a Sydney tradesman, who had built upon it a large and commodious bungalow, which he had had handsomely furnished, and let it to me at a nominal rental on the understanding that during the summer months he and his family were to occupy it occasionally for a few weeks at a time. It was a lonely spot—no neighbour within two miles—but very restful; and so when I, accompanied by my four-year-old daughter, a Samoan native boy named Sili, three large crates of ducks and fowls, two pigs and a cow and calf, took up our quarters, I had a pleasing patriarchal-like feeling.

We arrived at 10 a.m., and by sunset Sili and I had killed four snakes—one a huge "carpet" of ten feet in length, which was lying asleep on the top of an iron water-tank; another of the same species, but smaller, in the cow-shed; and two deadly brown snakes, both of which we found under an overturned washing bench at the back of the kitchen.

Within a week I discovered that we were in a thoroughly snake-infested country. In addition to the lazy and harmless "carpet," "diamond," and the beautiful bright green tree-snakes, there were also the venomous brown, black and "tiger," and a fair number of the dreaded "death adders." It was December when we arrived, and by the end of March we had killed some hundreds of the various kinds. The carpet and diamond variety were much attached to the fowl-house, and, although we had it enclosed with wire-netting, they still managed to get in occasionally and take a young duck or chicken. Then, in addition to



snakes, there were plenty of native cats, iguanas—also egg and fowl gourmands—and, after rain, swarms of scorpions and huge blue centipedes.

But against these crawling reptiles we had some compensation; Narrabeen Lagoon was literally teeming with fish, and in the way of game there were plenty of wild duck, gill birds, and king parrots; and so we lived very well, and were happy enough.

One day I went into the village of Manly—Sydney's Brighton—to buy some meat, and the butcher asked me if I wanted a good dog, and he pointed to a wicked-eyed, but handsome white fox-terrier, lying on the sawdusted floor. I did want a dog—badly—for the native cats had been playing havoc with my incubator-reared chickens and ducklings. So I became the possessor of “Pig.” Oh! would that these were the days of the Inquisition, and I were Chief Inquisitor, and now had that butcher man in my power!

“He's a splendid dog,” said the mendacious scoundrel, “but my missus don't like him, as he's always going fur the cat.” I said that that was very natural for almost any kind of dog; then he added that the missus had called him “Pig,” and that the name had stuck to him—which I thought was hard on the dog.

When I reached home in the evening with him, “Pig” at my heels, my infant daughter was charmed with him, and I too was pleased; for the creature evidently had great intelligence, and examined my native cat-trap with much interest. This trap had been devised by Sili and I after much brain work, and had proved highly successful—four of the spiteful spotted vermin already having fallen victims to it. It consisted of two barrels placed outside the fowl-house, lengthways. One had one end left in, the other (the front) was covered by wire-netting—inside was a live duck; against this first barrel was placed the other,

which had both ends knocked out, and in the bottom of this was a strong steel trap, lying in the bilge, and covered over with dead leaves. The stealthy, nocturnal murderer, creeping about the fowl-house, trying to find an entrance, could discern, through the dark vista of the empty barrels, a placidly sleeping duck at the farther end, and crawling slowly towards it over the dead leaves would settle down for the fatal spring, and then Snap! and fearful yells and blasphemous cat-language unattainable by the ordinary domestic breed. Then, if the wild beast did not bite off the imprisoned leg and escape, a charge of shot put it out of its misery.

That night we let Pig lie on the back verandah, and towards daylight we were aroused by the blood-curdling yells of a native cat, mingled with the howling of an injured dog. Sili and I rushed out to the trap, and as we reached it Pig darted past us to the house. In the trap was a large native cat, held by its hind legs, and spitting and snarling like a tiger. I struck a match, and saw that the creature's head and fore-paws were smothered in gore. We killed it, and then, after liberating the terrified decoy duck, returned to the house to see what was the matter with my child, who was screaming—and with Pig, who was howling.

We found the dog on the child's bed. They presented an appalling appearance, for Pig seemed to have been dipped in blood, and at the moment was actively engaged in soliciting sympathy from the terrified child by licking her face and hands.

After silencing the infant's screams, and washing her down, we attended to Pig, and found that the native cat had all but scalped him, and his ears resembled the frayed-out end of a piece of Manila rope. We did our best for him with "Jeyes'" fluid and lard, and then put him in hospital. In a fortnight he was out, chasing bandicoots and iguanas, and none the

worse except for his appearance—which was distinctly against him.

\* \* \* \*

One afternoon, as the Samoan boy and I were putting up some wire fencing, we were approached by a large grey cat, which seemed to come out of the bush from nowhere and to be going anywhere. It was a splendid-looking animal, and was plainly suffering from thirst, for as it sat down on its haunches a few feet away from us, it began to pant like an exhausted dog. We gave it a drink from our billy can of oatmeal water, and at once became friends, and Pig—who had reasons for disliking the feline race—also “took to him” and licked him thoroughly, the cat accepting his lavatory attentions with closed eyes, upturned chin, and a sonorous purr. He followed us home, and, with calm assurance, curled himself up in front of the kitchen fire and went to sleep. About five in the afternoon he went out for a stroll, and half-an-hour later trotted back with a live snake in his mouth. It was one of the deadly brown species, about two feet long, and “Yācob,”—as we had already named the cat, because it sounded like “Jäger”—had seized it just behind the head, which was hanging by a shred of skin only. He brought the writhing reptile into the kitchen, dropped it on the mat, regarded it with pensive interest for a few moments, and then proceeded to eat it in sections. Then he went to sleep again.

I do not exaggerate in the slightest when I say that almost every day for two months Yācob killed a snake of some sort, and brought it into the house. Some—if they were young and tender—he would eat, others which were too old he would not. Of the young brown snakes he was particularly fond, especially those which were at that stage of life when two tiny rudimentary legs, or rather fins, can be seen. (These rudimentary

limbs either fall off or are absorbed into the scales later on.) Very often Sili and I watched him seize his prey, and marvelled at his agility and courage. He never hesitated, and never failed. If the reptile was lying quiet, he would make a lightning-like spring and seize it close by the head, and with one quick crunch crush the vertebra; if it was gliding swiftly away, Yācob was equally as swift, and the snake never had time to make its half-coil to strike.

One day we saw a beautiful bright green tree-snake, in the branches of a honeysuckle, engaged in devouring the eggs in the nest of a minah bird. We brought Yācob, and put him up in the tree. The snake, which was non-venomous, and about three feet in length, though scarcely as thick as a man's little finger, at once tried to escape, but the cat chased it from branch to branch, and at last the reptile coiled itself round and round the rough bark of a branch, and hid its head in a depression, much to Yācob's anger. He bit it on the body several times and then seized it by the tail, and began to eat it leisurely inch by inch! In a few minutes the snake uncoiled and fell head downwards to the ground; the cat sprang after it and gave it the usual *coup-de-grace* by biting off the head.

Just about the time that this occurred, Pig began to show some bad traits. I had shot and plucked a black duck, and in the morning found it was gone from the wire meat-cover under which I had placed it in the kitchen. Suspecting an iguana was the thief, I thought no more of it, until happening to look inside the dog's kennel I saw the duck's feet and bill, and Pig did not show up as usual for breakfast. I found him hiding under a bed, dragged him out and duly chastised him. Two days later we missed a fine cross-bred Muscovy, and again Pig disappeared, and did not return that night. In the morning he came home with

a very guilty look, and later on Sili found the remains of the Muscovy among the reeds on the bank of a waterhole. To ascertain the dog's guilt or innocence we resorted to the French method of “reconstructing” the crime. Calling to the dog to come with us, we set out towards the waterhole; he followed us for a few hundred yards, and then showed signs of uneasiness as we drew near the scene of the deed. Then I went on ahead, and picking up the mangled remains of the bird held it up, and looked inquiringly at Pig; he turned his head aside, pretended he saw something in the scrub, and then made a bolt for his kennel. Sili thrashed him, and we kept him tied up for some time after.

One morning the Samoan boy, my little girl and I locked up the house to go to Sydney for the day. We could not find the dog, and concluded that he had gone hunting bandicoots in the night, and would turn up later on. Yācob we left asleep on top of a water-tank.

It so happened that, owing to a heavy gale that sprang up in the afternoon, we were unable to return that day, the Manly steamer not daring to leave and encounter the mountainous seas that were rolling in through Sydney Heads, and which she would have had to encounter broadside on. So that night we slept in the city, and caught the early morning boat at six o'clock, arriving finally at Narrabeen four hours later.

Yācob met us as we, laden with many parcels, tramped up the path to the house, which stood hot and shining white under the morning sun. Unlocking the back door, we entered, and I at once concluded that the place had been burglarised, or something like that had occurred. The kitchen floor was strewn with broken crockery and glassware—we had set the table for supper so as to save time when we returned—every blind was torn down, and, with the tablecloth, was



lying in strips on the floor. Passing into the dining-room an awful scene of devastation met our eyes—here, too, every blind, and the lace curtains as well, were lying in ribbons on the smooth, polished floor, mingled with torn books, music and broken vases, photographs, and other articles; a handsome morocco leather-covered couch, which stood near the French lights on the verandah, was hopelessly ruined, and not only was the leather in strips, but the horsehair stuffing had been torn out, and was scattered all over the room. In the bedrooms the same condition of affairs obtained—blinds down, spotless white quilts and sheets, and all such other bed-gear, lying around in confused heaps as if a tornado had visited the apartment and twisted everything about; toilet table covers, a lady's dressing-gown, and many articles of *lingerie*, broken soap-dishes, chewed up tooth and hair brushes, were all mingled together.

Under one of the beds we found Pig.

We tried him by court-martial right away, and, as I had already computed the damage he had inflicted would cost me at least £50, and the poultry were not paying, decided upon the death sentence being carried into effect summarily.

"What are you doing with poor Pig?" inquired my child, as Sili, grasping the wretched criminal by his collar, asked me for my revolver.

"Taking him for a bath," replied Sili in Samoan.

Yācob followed us down to a secluded spot, and after Sili had fulfilled his dread office by putting a bullet through Pig's brains, the cat came up, smelled the defunct curiously, and then, sitting on his haunches, gazed meditatively at the corpse.

I believe that if that cat could have spoken he would have said something to the effect that the Wages of Sin is Death.



## THE DESERTED ATOLL

THE night was very, very quiet, and soundless but for the low throbbing of the surf upon the weather side of the atoll. On the smooth, glass-like surface of the small but deep lagoon, fringed with a scanty, broken belt of silent coco-palms, the light of myriad stars shone down and glorified it so that it seemed to me as a lake of silver in the House Beautiful that is Beyond.

Our schooner lay at anchor outside the reef, two miles away from where I lay upon the coarse grass under the shadows of a small grove of pandanus palms, and every now and then I could see the gleam of her riding light as she rose to the heave of the long, gentle swell.

I had pulled on shore in the dinghy to spend the night on this lonely, uninhabited spot in the North Pacific for two reasons; one was that the vessel carried a malodorous cargo of copra and shark fins, and the other was that I wanted a night's fishing in the lagoon and a ramble over the seven small islets which formed the atoll. There was but one small boat-passage into the lagoon—so narrow that the tips of the oar-blades had grazed the coral sides.

It was past supper-time when the boat touched the firm sand of a white little beach that shone under the bright starlight, and which was almost in the centre of the largest of the seven islets. Here the coco and pandanus palms grew more plentifully than on any other of the islets, and the ground was strewn with old coconuts and the rich, red-yellow drupes of pandanus

fruit, upon which scores of red and grey robber crabs were silently but vigorously feeding.

I caught one of the smallest, killed it, baited one of my lines with the fat, luscious tail, and made a cast out into deep water ten fathoms from the beach. As the heavy bait struck the water hundreds upon hundreds of silvery gar-fish leapt out in alarm, and as they fell back there came from beneath swift gleams of bubbling, phosphorescent light, and then a hurried splashing on the surface, as a number of large, bream-shaped fish called *lahe'u* each seized one of the shining shafts of silver. Then, as the widening ripples died away, silence again—and a tug at my line.

I knew by the steady port-to-starboard pull that I had hooked an *uku*, a coarse-flavoured fish with a body like a salmon in shape and an ugly barbel-like head. I soon landed him on the beach, and then hung him up by his broad tail to a pandanus branch; our native crew would make their breakfast of him next morning.

I fished for an hour and then ceased, for I had caught more than the ship's company could eat in several days—*uku*, *lahe'u* and red rock cod. Then re-filling my pipe, and under the glorious starlight, I set out for a tramp along the inner beaches of the atoll.

The tide was on the ebb, and the connecting reef between the islets began to show blackly. There was not the faintest breath of a breeze to rustle the pendant palm leaves, and when after walking a mile on the sand I struck across the narrow belt of sandy soil and gained the weather side and a view of the ocean, I found that it, too, was slumbering as peacefully as the shimmering lake within the encircling belt of islets and reef. There was, it is true, a soft, gentle murmur of the sea as it laved the "steep-to" walls of coral rock.

Seating myself upon a large round boulder covered

thickly with a crispy creeper of pale green mingled with soft yellow moss, I turned my face to the lagoon and wondered what had been the fate of the brown people who had dwelt on these quiet islands fifty years before. Whaleships had in those days, and before, touched there and bartered with the natives for turtle, which abounded then as they do now. Then one day a ship called and lay-to off the reef waiting for the canoes to come out. But none came, and no smoke arose from the village of thatched huts amid the palm grove. A boat was sent into the lagoon, and the crew found the place deserted and the houses tenanted only by pigs and fowls. Everything of value to the native mind had disappeared, and not a single canoe was found.

It was never known what became of this community of over a hundred gentle, peaceable souls, who had no fear of enemies. Why had they taken to their canoes, and whither had they gone? The atoll is in the very north of the Radack Chain of the Marshall Archipelago; to the south were many islands all easily reached in those placid seas by even the smallest canoe; to the westward lie the hundred isles and atolls of the great Ralick Chain; to the eastward and north the landless ocean for more than two thousand miles. Perhaps, possessed by some hot and sudden desire to see the world beyond and find new lands, they had steered east and died of starvation and thirst upon the wide Pacific. The inhabited islands of the south and west they certainly did not try to reach, for some traces of the fleet would have been found had it been overwhelmed by a sudden squall—the broken canoes would have drifted on shore somewhere. No one will ever know now.

Near to where I sat was one of the few large trees that had its life in the warm and yet moist sandy soil.

It was a species of *figus* common to some of the atolls of the Pacific, and as I looked up at the lofty branches I saw they were occupied by thousands of roosting terns. The tree was evidently a breeding, as well as a roosting-place, for the bare ground beneath was white with egg shells.

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The red dome of the sun was bursting from the searim when I returned to the boat. A piece of fish grilled upon some glowing coals and a young coconut to drink made my breakfast; then, taking down my catch, I placed them in the dinghy and pushed off. As I rowed across to the passage a gentle air rippled the surface of the lagoon, and a tropic bird and his mate slid off from the crown of a coco-palm and sailed seaward, followed by a thousand croaking terns. Their day—and mine—had begun.

## THE PALA

It is near dawn and the little palm-clad isle of Nanomaga, in the South Pacific, wakes to life as the fleecy sea-mist which has encompassed it through the quiet night melts away to the first cool breaths of the rising trade-wind.

From the houses of thatch that are clustered under a grove of graceful, lofty cocos, thin streams of pale blue smoke float upward to a cloudless sky, and the murmur of women's voices is heard as they prepare the simple morning meal. A great dome of fire, blood-red, bursts upwards on the eastern sea-rim, and the island day has come.

Then singly, and in twos and threes, the men and boys of the village, clad only in their many-hued girdles of grass, sally forth to the beach for their morning bathe.

As they pass the trader's house the white man, too, comes out in his pyjamas to smoke his early pipe and drink his coffee.

A big, tawny-skinned native waves his hand to him as he passes and calls out the morning's greeting in bastard Samoan.

"Wilt come with us to-day in thy whaleboat, friend? We go to catch pāla after the first service is finished."

The white man nods assent.

"Aye, Kino, I shall come. 'Tis like to be a fair day for pāla."

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The island of Nanomaga is one of the Ellice Group,

lying 600 miles north-west of Samoa. It is the smallest of the seven, has no lagoon, and is less than four miles in circumference. Yet although it is merely an upheaved sandbank densely covered with coconut trees, with a few banyan trees, and produces no vegetable except a coarse variety of the taro called *puraka*, it supports a population of nearly 500 people. The men are fine, stalwart fellows, and except the Ocean Islanders there are no finer deep-sea fishermen in the whole Pacific. Living with them as I did for some time I learned to appreciate their estimable qualities, and owe them a debt of gratitude for all they taught me in the way of deep-sea fishing. For to me deep-sea fishing has been something more than a mere hobby—it has been a delight and solace during the many, many years I lived on the islands of the equatorial and north-west Pacific. And at Nanomaga (pronounced Nānoomanga) I caught my first pāla, as well as many other great deep-sea fish unknown to me except by name and by the many contradictory descriptions of them given to me by traders and by natives of other island groups.

The pāla is one of the handsomest, strongest and hardest-fighting fish in the Pacific. It is not often met with off the coasts of such high lands as Samoa, Fiji and the Solomon Archipelago, nor is it, as far as my experience goes, ever seen more than a few leagues away from land of any kind, although it is essentially a deep-sea fish, and never comes into shallow water inside the barrier reefs. But about the low-lying atolls and sand-banked islands of the mid-Pacific it is very plentiful, and the man who wants exciting, thrilling, soul-exciting sport, compared with which tarpon fishing is a dull and stodgy experience, should go to any of the mid-Pacific Islands and fish for pāla.

The pāla is one of the mackerel family, as far as its shape, general appearance and beauty of its colouring



goes. But its size is enormous; a big one will attain 7 feet in length, though its greatest circumference, at the shoulders, will be under 36 to 38 inches. Its flesh, though somewhat dry when the fish is full-grown, is very palatable and much prized by the natives, who prefer it to either that of the bonito or albacore.

The pāla is caught in two ways—by enticing it alongside a canoe or boat and getting a running bowline over its head, or by trolling for it with a long line and very stout hook baited with a fresh flying-fish or a young bonito. The latter method I liked best, for I had an American whaleboat, and with two natives to help me had no fear of being capsized or stove-in as often was the case in a light canoe, for an adult pāla is almost as strong and quite as swift as a porpoise, and it requires great skill to get one alongside and club him on his bony head or give him a lance-thrust through the vitals.

The head of the pāla consists of almost solid bone; the sides and gills are covered with a series of plates of great hardness, and the jaws are set not with teeth, but with serrated plates of bone nearly a third of an inch in thickness and about 15 inches in length. Woe to the hapless man who has the misfortune to get his hand between the jaws of a live pāla—it would be taken off as cleanly as if it had been severed with an axe.

The pāla preys mostly upon bonito, though it has a strong *penchant* for flying-fish. It is not a nocturnal feeder, and will never take a bait between sunset and sunrise. Once, one dark moonless night when I with some natives were flying-fish catching with torches outside the barrier reef of the atoll of Funfuti, a huge pāla swam slowly up to the canoe, attracted by the blazing torch of dried coconut leaves. He ranged alongside and remained perfectly motionless, and I was foolish enough to slip a bowline over his head and

haul taut when I had passed it down towards his tail. Dazed as he was by the brilliant light, he soon showed us that he was quite wide-awake. Leaping clear out of the water, he fell with a crash upon the outrigger platform, rolled off, and then made off with such lightning-like speed that I could not hold the line, the end of which was fast to the 'midship thwart of the canoe. Down went the outrigger and over went the canoe, and four natives and myself found ourselves in the water, listening to the jeers and laughter from other canoes. For quite twenty minutes we, all hanging on to the canoe, were dragged through the water. Then one of the natives got hold of the line, hauled himself along it up to the pāla, and drew his knife along its belly from the throat to the ventral fin. This fish was one of the largest that even the natives had seen, and weighed nearly 300 lbs.

During the time that I lived on Nanomaga (known to navigators as Hudson's Island) I had some glorious pāla fishing—fishing that only those who have caught tarpon can appreciate. For, like that huge herring, the pāla performs some curious acrobatic feats when he finds the hook firmly fixed in his long throat—it rarely penetrates his armour-plated jaws unless it happens to strike in the lower jaw under the tongue, where there is an unprotected spot of thick, tough skin between the angles of the jaw itself.

I must not forget to mention that this noble fish is in colour a very dark blue on the back, which is covered with fine, closely-set, iridescent scales; along the sides the blue becomes paler, and the whole lower parts of the body are a shining, burnished and scaleless silver; the fins are tipped with orange yellow, as are also the edges of the strong, bony and beautifully-shaped crescent tail. A more handsome fish does not range the seas.

The tackle I used was of 36-cord American white cotton, as thick as a stout lead pencil, and strong enough to hold a porpoise—the best tackle in the world. The hook was a 5-inch flatted Kirby, curved in the shank and swivel-fastened to a fathom of stout steel chain always kept brightly polished—as bright, in fact, as the shining flying-fish through which the hook was run lengthwise.

Whenever a “school” of bonito was seen off the reef of Nanomaga, I would, if there was any breeze at all, man my whaleboat and set off and follow them, knowing that at least two or three pāla would be in pursuit of the bonito, and that I was pretty certain to get one.

Once over the reef we would set sail—mainsail and jib—and pay out from 100 to 150 fathoms of line, with hook baited with a flying-fish, and giving the line a couple of turns around the loggerhead, off we went, using canoe paddles as well as canvas if the breeze was too light to enable us to overtake the “school” of bonito.

Then, once we were abroast of the swarm of hurrying, splashing and leaping fish—which well deserve their Spanish name of “beautiful,” I would give up the steer-oar to one of the boat’s crew, and stand by my line.

Five, perhaps ten, minutes might pass, and then would come a sudden tug and the line would tauten out like a steel bar, and a long shaft of shining blue and silver would spring high out of the water, curve into a half-moon shape, and fall back with a splash.

Then, down sail in a hurry, as the line is passed for’ard to whizz through the stem notch, and off goes the boat almost as quickly as if she were fast to a “fin-back” whale. Every now and then the line will slacken, and pāla will double and do the tarpon trick—

leaping out of the water and trying to shake the hook from his jaws.

But, fathom by fathom, the line is hauled in until we are near enough to get up to our prize, and give him a thrust or two with the lance or slip a bowline over him, and stun his vitality by a few blows from a heavy *toa* wood club on his bony head.

Then comes the task of getting our fish—still quivering and lashing his tail—inboard. It is not an easy one, even for three or four men, to get a 250-lb. fish over the gunwale of a whaleboat.

But it is done, and then up sail again and back to the island. The women and children rush down to the beach and say very complimentary things to the white man, for they know that he will only take one slice of the great fish, and give the rest of it to the village.

## WATERS, THE "LOAFER"

WE were lying in Apia Harbour, ready for sea—bound on a labour recruiting cruise to New Britain and New Ireland. It was just after dawn, when the skipper and I, who were sleeping on deck, were awakened by hearing a canoe come alongside, and a strange voice hailing the anchor watch.

"I want to see the captain at once." Then the stranger came aboard and walked aft.

"Well," said the captain, "who are you, and what do you want?"

"I'm—oh, my name is Brown—or Smith, if you like, and I want a berth as steward."

"Do you! Well, I have a steward—as you'll find out in a few minutes when he comes on board, and kicks you over the side." (Our steward had been given a night's liberty on shore and had promised to be back at six o'clock.)

"He won't, captain. In fact he can't, poor chap. He's dead. Had a mill with a big Dutchman at Charley the Russian's over a game of cards about an hour ago, and the Dutchman hit him over the heart. He dropped like a stone, and died in half-a-minute. Too fat, you know."

"And you want to step into his shoes before the poor devil is cold!"

"Will that hurt him, now that he is dead? You'll want a steward, and I'm as good a man as you can get in this place. There will be half-a-dozen mongrel Dagoes here before breakfast wanting the berth, and as I am the early bird I have the first right to the worm."

Packenham stroked his beard, and eyed our visitor steadily.

"Got good discharges?" he inquired.

"No—no discharges of any kind. But I can do the work."

"What have you been doing here in Apia?"

"Nothing—stony-broke, and loafing on the beach. Have a black mark against me—if you want to know the truth, my name is Waters—Jack Waters. I was second mate and recruiter of the *Princess*, and had to skip out of Fiji. I was sure that when the case came on, I should get five years at least. And yet I only acted as I ought to have done, and saved the ship."

In an instant our interest—and sympathies as well—were aroused. The *Princess* case was then being much talked about. Briefly it was this: The vessel, like ours, was in the Kanaka labour trade, and when at Bougainville Island in the Solomon Group, a determined attempt to cut her off was made by the natives. The captain and two of the crew were clubbed to death, and the rest would have shared their fate but for Waters and a seaman, who, taking their Winchester carbines, sprang up the rigging into the fore-top, and from there shot down at the savages on deck, killing eleven, and wounding several others. The rest sprang overboard and swam ashore, and Waters, unfortunately, killed two more as they were escaping. This, in the opinion of the commander of a gunboat then cruising in the Solomons, was "cruel and unnecessary slaughter." The *Princess* was seized and sent to Fiji, with a prize crew, and a few days later Waters, by bribing his native gaolers, made his escape.

\* \* \* \* \*

The captain pondered a moment or two. Samoa was then out of the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, so Waters was safe from



arrest for the present. But he would not be so once we left Samoa, and there was every likelihood of our meeting a British man-of-war somewhere about New Britain or New Ireland.

"Look here, Waters. I'll do what I can for you, and will ship you as steward and cook; but you know that we are going to the north-west, and——"

Waters nodded—"I know. But I'll take my chance. Will you give me the berth?"

"Yes. Now you can go for'ard and dig into the galley. Then after breakfast you can come ashore with me to the Consul's and sign on. Anyone know you are here?"

"No one."

"So much the better. The Consul is an 'old woman,' who would have you arrested by the municipal police on his own authority, and send you back to Fiji, if he knew who you were. He'd crawl a mile on his stomach to please the High Commissioner."

Then Waters, the Recruiter, became "Brown," the Steward. Without any pretence of sham subservience he raised his hand to his wide-brimmed Panama hat.

"Thank you, sir. What will you have for breakfast?"

"Anything you like to give us. Where is your gear?"

"Alongside in the canoe."

Packenham laughed—"You were dead sure on getting poor Simpson's berth, Waters. Now come below and have a gin and bitters. This is my Recruiter"—indicating me.

"Glad to meet you, sir," said the man quietly, as he and I shook hands. And from that time out till we saw the last of him, he was "Brown, the Steward," and always "sir-ed" the captain and me when anyone else was present. At night, however, the captain, the

two mates and myself would talk freely together with "Jack Waters"—one of the best sailor men that ever trod deck. In my ever vivid memory of him the man is before me now as I first saw him—the square-set, bronzed face, unshaven chin, and long, ragged moustache; keen, deep-set, heavy-browed eyes of steely, challenging grey. His every feature was in consonance with his build—somewhat short in stature, broad chest, small feet, and equally small and shapely hands, that somehow seemed quite disproportionate to his other limbs. But they were hands that he could use effectively, as we soon discovered.

Our boatswain took a dislike to "Brown," and two days after we had left Apia said something derogatory to him about his cooking.

"Brown" came aft to the skipper.

"I'm very sorry, sir, but I've hurt the bo'sun. I think it is one of his ribs."

\* \* \* \* \*

With the lusty south-east trade we made a quick run from Samoa till we were abroast of Ysabel Island in the Solomon Group; then we ran into dirty weather from the westward, and the second mate—a half-caste Maori—had his leg badly fractured in trying to secure some of the spare spars we carried on the main deck, and which had got adrift one wild night when the little brig was rolling her soul out in a thumping cross sea, in which two of our boats were damaged. "Brown" (who was tenderly nursing the bo'sun with his broken rib) made splints and set the limb in a thoroughly surgeon-like manner, and then offered to take the injured man's watch.

"No," said the captain, "you stick to your patients—but you can lend me a hand to put in a couple of planks in the second covering boat. That is, if you like."

"Certainly, sir," replied "Brown," the well-mannered steward.

\* \* \* \* \*

I took the second mate's watch, and Waters and the captain worked at the boat. Waters was a man who could "turn his hand" to anything, and everything he did was done in a quiet, self-possessed manner. With our native crew he was a great favourite, and we soon found that he was a splendid Malayo-Polynesian linguist. I felt sure that he had been in the Navy, and one day asked him if it was so.

"Yes, but I left it twenty years ago," he said shortly, and I saw it was a subject to which I must not further allude.

Our vessel, I must mention, was a brig of 300 tons, a very fast sailer, but a terribly wet ship when under a press of canvas. Like most small vessels in those early days of the labour trade we carried four small guns, which were always kept in good order, though we had never had occasion to use them to keep off a sudden rush of canoes, relying upon the numbers and steadiness of our crew to foil any attempt at cutting off. A vessel with a low freeboard like ours is a great temptation to mischievous savages—they can so easily jump out of their canoes over the rail, but the sight of the guns was always enough for them. Our complement consisted of captain, two mates, myself (recruiter), boatswain, four white A.B.s, and fourteen reliable native seamen—Rarotongans, Savage Islanders, Samoans, and two Fijians. The latter, although not such good men at boat work as the others, were fine, plucky fellows, and belonged to my boat, for they both spoke the New Britain and New Ireland language, and were invaluable as interpreters when opening up communications with the treacherous savages with whom we had to deal. Our Maori half-caste second mate was

also a fairly good Melanesian linguist, and always came with me in his covering boat. I could speak but very little of the New Britain dialect, for I was almost new to the North-West Pacific labour trade, although I had had long experience of it in the Line Islands, where the language is Malayo-Polynesian.

Our arms were Snider carbines for the native crew, and Winchester carbines and revolvers for the officers, white seamen and myself. So far we had been very lucky in not losing a man in three voyages, although the boats had been fired upon often enough in the Solomon and New Hebrides Groups.

\* \* \* \*

Early one morning we ran into Montague Bay on the south coast of New Britain. No labour vessel had ever before been there, and we were in hopes of getting our first recruits from a big native town there. I had heard of the place from the captain of an American whaleship, who said that the natives, though they swarmed around his ship in their canoes, did not attempt to come on board, and supplied him with all the fresh provisions he wanted.

We anchored in ten fathoms, abreast of the big village, and in less than half-an-hour six or seven canoes, filled with natives, came off, but would not come alongside—they had caught sight of the guns on the main deck. My two Fiji men began to talk to them, but their dialect was so different from that of the natives on the north coast of the island, that they could not be very well understood. However, after a time, one of the Fiji men jumped overboard, unarmed, swam to a canoe and, holding on to the gunwale, held a conversation with the occupants. Then he called out to us to cover up the four guns, as the strangers knew what they were and were afraid of them.

We quickly covered up the four six-pounders and

closed the ports, and in a few minutes the canoes came alongside, and several of the natives, all carrying spears and long stone-headed clubs, timorously came on deck. They were the wildest-looking savages we had ever seen, as naked as when they were born. Their skins were the colour of freshly-chipped logwood, and their hair was done up in innumerable tiny ringlets, smothered in grease and dyed a dirty red by means of lime. Their lips were simply hideous slashes of scarlet, covering teeth as black as jet—the result of continually chewing betel nut. Altogether they were the most unpromising-looking "blackbirds" that ever put foot on a ship's deck.

In the course of an hour or so we became quite friendly, and I had every hope of getting a batch of recruits during the day, so I told our visitors to go on shore, and tell their friends that I was coming to see them. Off they went, and then we lowered and manned two boats—my own and the covering boat. A "covering" boat, I may mention, is sent as a protection to the first, in which the recruiter goes. With dangerous natives—and in those days all the North-Western Islands were dangerous, the following practice was observed. The recruiter's boat pulled in to the beach, but, before touching, it was slewed round and backed in stern first. Then the recruiter had his box of trade goods placed on the beach, and stepped out of the boat. Generally he was unarmed, so as to give the natives confidence, for sometimes they would resent the sight of a revolver in his belt, sulk, and no "business" would be done. Then the boat would push off a little so as to just keep afloat in case of treachery—the crew ready to bend to the oars the moment the recruiter was on board again—that is if he was lucky enough to get there. Meanwhile the covering boat stood by, ready to open fire and cover the escape of the first boat, or

go to the assistance of the recruiter and his crew if they were being overpowered by a sudden rush of savages.

On this occasion I had with me in my boat the two Fijians, two Rarotongans, and a native of Savage Island. My trade chest was filled with the usual gear dear to the New Britain native—12-inch butcher knives, red beads, hoop iron for making knives, and clay pipes and tobacco, although the latter article was almost unknown to these particular savages, who did not possess a pipe amongst them.

Just as I was going over the side into the boat Waters asked permission to come with me, as he wanted to get some sand for holystoning the cabin deck. The captain was agreeable, and so was I, so off we went, and in a few minutes we were abreast of the village beach, which was thronged with natives, all armed with spears and clubs, as was to be expected, but maintaining a friendly demeanour. Three or four hundred yards away from the men were fifty or sixty women and children, squatted on the sand—a sure indication, as I believed, that the boats would not be attacked. So slewing round, I backed in, left my steer oar apeak, and got out with my trade box, one of the Fiji men coming with me to interpret.

In half-an-hour sixteen stark nude, intelligent cannibals had promised to “recruit” with me to work for three years in Samoa on the cotton plantations, and I felt mightily pleased with myself as I gave each man a present of some beads, a knife and some tobacco on account of the magnificent salary each was to receive—£6 per year in trade goods. They promised to come on board later on in the day with their relatives, when I was to make them a further advance of whatever might take their fancy in the trade room.

Just as I was about to get back into the boat, I



remembered Waters, who had gone along to a little bay some distance away, where there was a beach of fine, white sand—the spot where the boats were had a muddy foreshore.

"Where is the steward, Bill?" I called out to the second mate in the covering boat.

"Just along there, sir," and he pointed to the sandy beach, which I could not see from where I stood—"we can pick him up there."

Remarking that he had no business to go so far away from the boats in a new place, I got into the boat, and had just taken the haft of the steer oar in my hand when the second mate gave a yell.

"Look out, sir, look out," and then he and his boat's crew opened fire as a shower of spears rained upon us from the shore. Only one, however, did any serious damage—it hit one of the Fiji men, who was pulling stroke, and went through his thigh. But in less than two minutes we were out of spear range, and then both boats set off to pick up Waters.

"He's all right, sir," cried the second mate, "he has your Winchester. He's coming to meet us."

Waters was running—not very fast—along the beach, carrying a bag of sand in one hand, and my Winchester in the other. Suddenly he stopped, and then threw himself flat down upon the sand, his bag of sand in front of him, and facing towards the dense bush less than twenty yards distant. Then, at the same moment as the Winchester cracked, a shower of spears flew about him, and again and again he fired, whilst we in the boats, although we could not see a single native, began firing into the bush, from whence the spears were coming. Then we rushed the boats for the beach, and whilst the men in the covering boat went to see to Waters, my crew and I tore up the bank, bent on getting to close quarters with his treacherous assailants.

Not a single live native could be seen, but we found three dead and two wounded. As we were examining the latter, the brig opened fire on the village with the port side guns, much to the delight of the two Fiji men, who now had the slaughter lust, and wanted me to attack and burn the village. But I had had enough excitement, and was half-blind as well, for in running up the bank I had caught my foot in a creeper and fallen, and the man behind me—a Savage Islander—trod on my face and filled my eyes with sand.

Returning to the beach I was grieved to find that Waters was badly wounded. No less than three spears had struck him, and it was marvellous that he had not been killed, for we picked up over thirty of the long slender weapons lying about him. His worst wound was in the back—the spear had entered it obliquely, come out on the left side, and buried a half-foot of its length in the sand. The others wounds were trifling in comparison, but the poor fellow was in great agony, although losing but little blood.

I saw that it was necessary to remove the spear from his back at once, and this was done by one of the Fijians in a splendidly expert manner. It was of the same thickness for two feet of its length, and the Fijian first cut it off at the back, then we turned Waters over on his side, and the “surgeon,” seizing the blood-stained, sandied point, pulled it out by one swift, steady pull.

“I felt like a cursed porcupine,” he said faintly, as I gave him some rum and water. “Did you find any dead niggers?”

“Three—and two wounded.”

In a few minutes we were on our way to the brig, and Waters was laid out on the skylight; the captain dressed his wounds, whilst the mate got the ship to sea again. Then we stood away for New Ireland.

In three weeks Waters had recovered, and was at work again, and was of great assistance in helping us to get nearly forty recruits at Ralum, on the north coast of New Britain, where he was well known to the natives. Then we worked back to New Ireland, and got sixty more, which made us a full ship, and left us to thrash our way against the South-East trade back to Samoa.

Just off Rotumah Island we met H.M.S. —, which signalled to us to heave-to. Then we were boarded by her first lieutenant, a tall, grey-haired man, who was good enough, after he had examined our papers, to compliment us on the appearance of the brig, and the healthy contented looks of our hundred blackbirds.

As he was talking to us in the cabin Waters entered, and the moment the officer saw him his face flushed, and for some moments the two men looked keenly at each other. Then Waters turned to the captain, and said quietly—

"Is there anything you want, sir?"

"Nothing, thank you, steward."

Waters stood still a second and looked at the naval officer, and in his deep-set grey eyes there came such a look of deadly hatred that his face was transformed. Then, with a contemptuous gesture, he turned and went on deck.

At Samoa he left us, shipping as an A.B. on an American schooner bound to Honolulu. We were sorry to lose him, and as he bade me good-bye on shore that evening he told me a little of his past.

"Do you remember the lieutenant who boarded us off Rotumah?" he asked.

"Yes."

"He is my brother. He stole the woman I loved from me. That is what turned me into a wandering loafer."

## THE TRAMP FISHERMAN

Two English friends of mine wrote to me recently, giving a brief summary of their fishing experiences on the southern and eastern coasts of Australia. They enjoyed themselves most thoroughly, despite the heat and the plague of mosquitoes, and wound up their letter with an eulogy of certain rivers and inlets on the Victorian coast—veritable paradises for the fisherman: “There is nothing on the coast of your ‘old’ New South Wales to compare with scores of places in Victoria.”

My pride (being a native of New South Wales) was wounded, especially at an allusion that was made to the “little tinpot lagoons” on the seaboard of the mother colony, which were “full of stingarees (sting-rays) and beastly saw-fish,” and I wrote what I tried hard to make a sarcastic reply, implying that my friends had been using fishing nets in Victoria, instead of rods or hand lines. But in my innermost heart I knew that they were right, and that the much indented coastline of the southern colony is a fisherman’s paradise. Yet, for all that, the 500 miles of coastline of the mother colony possesses many ideal fishing resorts—places, in most instances, far away from the centres of population, and therefore all the better and the more enjoyable and rest-giving to the man who is content to sleep out in the open, or, if it rained, under a light tent, instead of returning, as night falls, to some rough bush hotel, where the beautiful fish he has caught are handed over to the barbarities of an alleged cook, who dumps

them into a pan of rancid mutton or beef fat, and probably serves them up cheek by jowl with a steaming round of corned beef and cabbage. For it is a sad, sad fact that the average Australian country hotel cook—she is generally a native of the Emerald Isle—cannot cook, and the idea of grilling or baking a delicious whiting, or silvery mullet, or bream, instead of insulting it with the greasy frying-pan, would strike her as a weird phantasy, born of an incapable digestion and a morbid imagination. But there are many exceptions to this distressful state of things, especially in Tasmania and New Zealand. I have walked the coastline of New South Wales from the Tweed River on the Queensland boundary to Twofold Bay, near the border of Victoria, and *vice versa*, and always tried to avoid spending a night in an hotel in any of the small country towns, even when I knew I should find a warm welcome and good food and accommodation.

The coastal settlers are, as a rule, the most hospitable people one could wish to meet, and are only too glad to welcome a stranger who can put up with their rough fare. Very rarely indeed will they ask for, or even expect, recompense. The younger members of the family are only too pleased to come shooting or fishing with any chance visitor, and I shall always remember a delightful two weeks spent at a selector's holding in the vicinity of Wreck Bay, near the Victorian boundary line. The country round about was very sparsely populated, and game—black and wood duck and teal—were plentiful, and the creek, on the bank of which the house was built, teemed with fish. On both sides were oyster beds half a mile long—a perfect mine of wealth had there been any means of getting the bivalves to Sydney or Melbourne within a reasonable time and at a reasonable cost—and large prawns were in such abundance that two of the settler's children could fill

a four-gallon bucket with them in an hour, using only a small and crudely made scoop-net about the size of a soup plate.

But I am sheering away from my subject, which is to describe two of my many solitary trips along the coast of New South Wales among the "little tinpot lagoons," so cruelly maligned by my two English friends as being "full of stingarees and beastly saw-fish."

Thirteen miles from the quaint, old-fashioned, and sleepy little township of Port Macquarie (160 miles from Sydney) is a lagoon named Cattai Creek. In dry seasons and when the weather is calm the mouth of the creek is often entirely closed by a sandbank about half a mile in length, and vast quantities of fish congregate at the lower end endeavouring to get to sea, for in the course of a few weeks the water becomes too brackish for their comfort. A sudden downpour of rain or an easterly gale, however, soon makes a passage through the belt of sand, and then an extraordinary and interesting sight may be witnessed, thousands upon thousands of mullet, whiting, bream, gar-fish, etc., rushing out into the surf, where, by some curious intuition, a number of sharks and porpoises are almost sure to be waiting for them. In a few hours the lagoon may be almost devoid of fish, but as the tide flows through the opening they return, accompanied by fresh battalions recruited from the sea, and the fishermen can then have excellent sport, especially in the early morning and towards evening, when the sun is not too much in evidence. On both banks of the creek there is excellent camping ground under clumps of wattle trees, and there is fresh water a few hundred yards away—the lagoon is the outlet for Lake Innes. The place is very seldom disturbed by visitors, except on public holidays, when a party from the township may come



there, catch more fish than they can possibly take back with them, and leave hundreds to putrify on the firm, clean sandbank, which forms a natural esplanade. Sharks very seldom enter the lagoon, on account of its being too shallow, though I have occasionally seen small ones cruising about after mullet. Large "stingarees," however, are all too plentiful, and may be seen through the clear water lying upon the smooth sandy bottom or leisurely swimming around close to the banks, gorging themselves upon small fish and crabs, and sometimes a band of kingfish—big fellows of 20 lbs. or more—will make an incursion and play havoc with the mullet, whiting, etc.

The passage is on the south side of the sandbank (that is its normal position, though heavy rains and flood waters sometimes sweep away the entire bank, and leave the lagoon open to the sea for a week or so), and winds along a low and densely-foliaged bank. The bottom of the passage is full of deep holes and contains many rocks, and the strong current—when the lagoon is open—necessitates very heavy sinkers being used if one is fishing for bream or tarwhine, with which it generally abounds, though they are scarce in other parts of the lagoon when compared with the numbers of other fish. These bream were the shyest I ever came across, and the mere shadow of a man would send them darting to the shelter of the rocks amid the rushing currents. But they, nevertheless, made great sport (though none were over 2 lbs.), especially if the hook was baited with a tiny gar-fish or baby mullet about an inch in length. The bait, however, mostly used is the "pip-pip," or sand cockle, obtained on the sea beach. These handsome bivalves, with their many-hued shining shells, are in themselves excellent eating for man as well as fish. Baked in the hot ashes of a wood fire, they give forth a most appe-

tising odour, and, with the addition of pepper, salt, and bread or damper, a few dozen make an enjoyable meal if a man is at all hungry. For soup, too, they are very good if not boiled too quickly, which hardens them too much. These shellfish can be found almost all along the seaboard of New South Wales, especially near the embouchures of rivers or creeks.

Many years ago I was coming along the coast from Point Plomer to Smoky Cape, and it was then that I was first shown how pippy soup was made. The weather was very bad; rain had been falling almost continuously for a week, and for two days a heavy easterly gale had been howling along the coast, and a terrible surf was pounding on the beaches. At six o'clock in the evening, when I was wet through, hungry, and feeling pretty wretched generally, I found I was still ten miles from my destination—the little hamlet of Russell, just round Smoky Cape—and was looking out for a suitable camping place for the night when I came across a camp of timber-getters. They made me most welcome, and in a few minutes I was inside their tent changing my sodden clothes and watching two of the men engaged respectively in opening oysters and pippies and turning them into the galvanised iron bucket which served as a cooking pot.

“Lucky for us there’s plenty of fish, pippies and oysters about here,” said one of them, adding that their supply of beef had run out and the weather was too bad for them to send thirty miles for any. “There’s a little creek a mile from here just full of oysters—we got a three-bushel bag full yesterday—and there’s pippies everywhere. As for fish, we’re dead sick of ’em; when it’s blowing an easterly like this you can pick up all you want on the beach as fresh as if they were alive. Look there,” and he pointed outside to where several large trevally were suspended from a

branch. "We found those to-day, and we'll have a couple of 'em for breakfast."

Never have I so enjoyed a meal as I did that combined soup of oysters and pippies, eaten from a tin plate with an iron spoon. The pottage had been thickened with damper crusts, and we were so well satisfied with it that some cold rashers of bacon were rejected with scorn. All that night it continued to pour with rain, and the wind blew fiercely; but we heeded not the weather, for the tent was watertight, and had been fixed on the lee side of a scrub-covered bluff about 100-ft. high, which afforded us good shelter from the wind. The horses stayed quite near us, for every now and then we could hear their bells. At daylight the rain ceased, and by breakfast (seven o'clock) the sun was shining brightly from an almost cloudless sky, although the wind had not diminished. My hosts pressed me to "do a day's loafing" with them, and said they would show me some places on the beach where they had washed out some gold from the black sand; but as this would mean my turning back I had to decline their offer with regret. They showed me the gold—about twenty-five pennyweights—which was of excellent quality, and said that with proper appliances for washing the sand two men could make from £2 to £3 a week almost anywhere along the beaches from Camden Haven to the Richmond River beads. That they were correct was proved a year or two later, when some hundreds of men were "beach mining" along the coast and making fairly good money.

But to return to Cattai, for perhaps some reader may some day find himself there on fishing bent, and I should like to add something concerning the tackle used. For flathead—a very delicately-flavoured fish when not over 2-ft. in length—a stout line with strong hooks and wire snoodings is necessary, as it has a trick

of biting a line through if the hook has caught anywhere near the angle of the jaw, for the moment it feels the train of the line it fights very gamely, and keeps twisting its bony flat head and almost equally flat body swiftly from side to side; once it gets the line between its teeth its freedom is achieved. On many occasions I have seen large flathead caught with three or four hooks sticking out from the jaws—hooks that were too stout to rust away or be otherwise got rid of for many weeks. In freeing the hook from a fish, especially if it (the fish) is a large one, great caution must be exercised, or one may receive a blow, or, rather, stab, from either of the two needle-pointed external fangs which point downwards along the back of the head towards the tail. A thrust from one of these barbs causes excruciating pain, and sets up violent inflammation. The best way is to place the left foot on the fish's head to keep it steady, and then work the hook to and fro until it is sufficiently loosened in the tightly-set jaws to be easily withdrawn. Flathead are extraordinarily swift swimmers, and although their usual position is to lie flat upon the sand, in which the body is almost buried, they can see a long way ahead, and can make a lightning-like dart for 30-ft. or more after an unsuspecting whiting or mullet feeding on the bottom.

When fish are very plentiful in Cattai and other tidal lagoons some curious things occur. One may be using a thin line with five or six hooks intended for bream, tarwhine, mullet, or whiting, and almost as the sinker splashes into the water three (or four) of the baits are seized by, say, a whiting, a bream, and a tarwhine or mullet respectively. As you haul in as quickly as possible through the shallow, clear-as-crystal water, you can see what you have hooked, and a very pretty sight it is to watch three or four differ-

ent kinds of fish come struggling and splashing towards you. Another ten yards and you will have landed them safely upon the sloping bank, when suddenly there is a comet-like scour of sand astern of the last fish, and in an instant a flathead is fast to one of the spare hooks. If your tackle is strong enough you may land him with his companions; if not, away goes the hook, or perhaps the line parts if the former is the stronger. Now comes the critical time. Ten feet more and all will be well, and then another spurt of sand, and a second flathead joins the company. He is either hooked or has seized a whiting or mullet. In the latter case he will either break the line or tear the fish away; but, perhaps, by good luck, you may land the whole five or six. And what a delightful feeling it gives you in such a case!

Once, when a friend and I were camped at the mouth of a creek near Crescent Head, where we had been for two days shooting black duck—which were fairly plentiful—we were much put out by the arrival, in a rattletrap old spring cart, of five noisy young Colonials from a little township ten miles or so away. However, on learning that they had but one gun between them, and were bent upon fishing only, our fears subsided and we became affable. They camped near us, and presently gave us an exhibition of what they could do in the way of getting fish expeditiously without a net; it was amusing as well as instructive. First of all they collected a bag of pippies, and then searched the rocks under Crescent Head for an octopus. In half-an-hour they found two, and returned jubilant. Then to each of their lines—after stretching them out straight on the sand—they tied on at least a hundred hooks, large and small, and placed about a foot apart. The lines were very thick and strong, such as deep-sea fishermen use, the hooks being attached by short pieces of ordin-



ary bream line. This work occupied the youthful "talent" nearly two hours, including the baiting with pippies and pieces of octopus; then the young gentlemen stripped, and each, taking the end of his line, waded or swam across the creek, according to the depth, after having asked us to see that the baited portion of their tackle ran clear. To this we duly attended, and in a short time the lads landed on the opposite side, keeping a good distance apart from each other, and then began hauling their lines across till the last of the baited hooks, together with the heavy lead sinkers, on our side had disappeared in the water. Then, whilst one of the boys waded across the creek at a point higher up, in order to bring over his own and his companions' clothes, the others, after securing the ends of their lines to stones or trees, raced along the beach to the surf for a bathe. "Well," said my friend meditatively, "those youngsters mean to take things easy and enjoy themselves. Let us cross over and see what they get when they haul in; the creek is full of fish."

On our way over we met the boy coming for the clothes. We asked him when they were going to pull in. "Oh, as soon as I get back with our shirts and pants and boots," he replied; "it's too jolly hot to go without 'em. Are you comin' over to see? We'll give you all the fish you want."

We waited for him to return, and a few minutes later his companions came hurrying back from the shore, and quickly donned their garments. Then we all went to the lines, and when within a few yards of the nearest, I could see by its quivering tension that there were many fish hooked. The other lines were also in the same condition, and within less than thirty minutes from the time they had set them the boys began to haul in. Three of them were not strong



enough for the task of getting in such a weight of fish that were on their respective tackles, and my friend and I went to their assistance, and even then it was no light task, one line being very difficult to get in on account of a large "stingaree" being among the take. When all the lines were in, and the fish hauled high up on the bank, the work of taking them off the hooks was begun. Each line averaged about forty fish, black and silvery bream, whiting, and a species of sea-perch predominating. There were a few flathead, some worthless bony soles, and some ugly stinging fish. The boys said it was not a good take, but that they would get more next time, as the tide came in and brought more fish and clearer water. After digging a pit on the bank they threw in their fish and filled it with wet sand to keep them cool, then rearranged and rebaited their tackle and took it over to the other side in the same manner as had first been done. In the course of a few hours they had caught an amazing quantity of splendid fish, and after cooking and eating some, together with a couple of ducks and a brace of pigeons, which we gave them, they put their takes in the spring cart, bade us good-bye—or, rather, "So long!"—and drove off.

Between the Nambucca River and Port Macquarie there are many creeks and tidal waters which afford excellent sport, though I must admit that in some of them there are too many "stingarees," and also plenty of the harmless, but decidedly objectionable (to the fisherman), shovel-nosed sharks. November and December are the best months, before the weather becomes too hot and even fishing and shooting become somewhat of a labour. Between the mouth of the Macleay River and Smoky Cape is Trial Bay, at the south end of which, and just at the back of the Cape, is the little hamlet of Russell, which came into existence through the erection of a large prison for first-

class prisoners on the Cape itself. Here, if the traveller does not want to camp out, he can obtain accommodation at the local public-house, and spend a very enjoyable time in fishing for sea-bream, trevally and tarwhine from the hard beach, which for a mile or two from the Cape dips suddenly, and affords fairly deep water, even at low tide. But fine weather is indispensable. If it is at all rough there is too much sea for beach fishing: though one may take a boat and go and anchor anywhere off the Cape in from twenty to forty fathoms and catch the best, gamest, and handsomest fish in the Austral seas—the lordly schnapper!

## ABOUT SHARKS

CONSIDERING the numbers of the various species of sharks which infest the warm waters of the Southern Seas, and the countless thousands of people who bathe in the open so often, it is surprising that so few accidents occur. Sydney Harbour, for instance, is notorious for the number and ferocity of its sharks: and yet it is a matter of fact that seldom more than one or two persons are seized during the course of an entire year. In the summer months, however, the warmth of the water tempts bathers into carelessness; people, especially boys, enjoy themselves by swimming in the open in preference to using one of the many public sea-bathing establishments, of which there are so many along the shores of Port Jackson. I have always considered the Parramatta River, Lane Cove, and the arms of the Parramatta as being far more dangerous to bathe in or to be upset in, in a boat, than the clear crystal-like waters of the islands of the North or South Pacific. And, indeed, the majority of deaths caused by sharks at Sydney occur in the upper reaches of the harbour, where the water, not being clear, especially when the tide is on the ebb, these predatory terrors are enabled to approach almost unobserved, and seize the unsuspecting bather with far greater facility than would be afforded the brutes in a water uncontaminated with mud or any other colouring matter.

For me, sharks and their habits have always possessed a very great interest. For five years (when a boy) I resided at a point on the Parramatta River directly opposite the then penal settlement of Cockatoo Island (now known as Biloela), and my brothers and

myself not only learnt a great deal about sharks, but had some local fame as expert shark-catchers, and our knowledge grew when we subsequently went to reside at the little township at the mouth of the Hastings River, 160 miles north of Sydney. I must confess, however, that I did not in those days dream that later on in life I should for two years, be engaged in shark-catching in the South Seas as a business on behalf of a firm of Chinese merchants. They employed small schooners manned by Polynesians, and our fishing grounds were Providence Lagoon, and other isolated atolls in the North Pacific. It took us from six to nine months to obtain a cargo of dried fins and tails for the Chinese markets, and the labour of catching and killing one to two hundred sharks every day was arduous in the extreme.

On the eastern coast of Australia the names of several of the species of sharks differ from those given to them in Tasmanian, New Zealand and Victorian waters. Those that the Sydney fisherman knows best, and which prove such a pest to him when pursuing his calling, and destroy human life, are the Tiger Shark, the Blue Pointer, the so-called White Shark and the Grey Nurse. Then come the Six-gilled and Seven-gilled Shark, the Hammerheads and Saw-Shark. There is also the well-known "Wobbygong," a creature of extraordinary and beautiful colouring, haunting rocky bottoms and feeding largely upon crayfish and other crustaceans. I have never heard of the Wobbygong attacking man. It is sluggish in its movements, and during the day-time may frequently be seen lying upon the bottom, its body resembling a gaily-coloured and motley-patterned strip of carpet. It is a nocturnal feeder, but is often caught on the line at day-time if the baited hook is lowered directly in front of its mouth, which, unlike that of

most of its brethren, is not undershot. The jaws are filled with a mass of ugly-looking pointed teeth, set together in an irregular fashion, but all inclining inwards. This shark has the most extraordinary power of assimilating the colouring and markings of its coat to its surroundings, and it requires a keen observer to determine whether the object at which he is gazing under ten feet or so of water is not a patch of blue, red and orange-coloured sea-weed growing upon stones or coral of equally brilliant and the same hues.

I have frequently found a wobblygong lying asleep in shallow rocky pools at low tide, and seizing it gently, but firmly, by the tail, dragged it out of the water. I have never seen one exceeding five feet in length in Australian waters, but have heard of some attaining seven feet. Along each side of the head, and extending as far as the first gill slit, there is a very curious arrangement, consisting of a series of flaps of skin, growing out from the side of the head, and with irregular, serrated edges—in fact, they struck me as resembling ragged maple leaves in their autumnal tints. The appendages, when the creature is lying quiet, will often be seen to undulate gently as would sea-weed when swayed by the passage of water through the crevices of a pool or by the current. Doubtless these are an aid to concealment, and possibly a source of attraction to inquisitive fish or crustaceans. I have several times tried to preserve the beautiful colouring on the skin of one of these sharks, but have always failed. The outlines of the markings have remained, but the colours soon faded.

The Blue Pointer is an exceedingly handsome shark, with a graceful, tapering body, long projecting snout, and an undershot mouth, provided with razor-sharp, non-serrated teeth. It is exceedingly swift in its movements, and can turn with lightning-like rapidity.

The skin on the back and head is blue, growing lighter on the sides, and the belly a pure white. This shark is more dreaded by the Australian line fishermen than any other, for when two or three of them make their appearance, it is almost impossible to draw a hooked fish to the surface. I have frequently seen one of these monsters seize half-a-dozen hooked fish in quick succession upon as many lines, and then, finding himself hooked, twine the lines round and round his body in his rage and efforts to escape. It is always best, when not more than two or three of these brutes begin to persecute, to at once bait the shark tackle, hook and then haul them alongside in turn, and sever the spine at the juncture of the tail with a hatchet; then, if the boat is large enough and will stand the severe shaking, club them on the head, cut the lines, and let the carcasses sink. But this can only be done where the boat is manned by at least three men well used to the danger of having an angry blue pointer alongside, lashing the water into foam, and snapping his jaws wildly in the chance hope of getting something between them on which to vent his fury. But even after having rid themselves of their enemies, the fishermen must up anchor and move to fresh ground, other "pointers," and perhaps a dreaded grey nurse or two, would be sure to be on the spot ere long, and, disdaining for the time being the bodies of their brethren, devote themselves to the fishing lines.

As far as I can remember, I know of only three instances in which human beings have been taken by blue pointers on the Australian coast. One occurred long years ago. A man-servant of Mr Benjamin Boyd, seeing several blue pointers cruising about the base of some slippery rocks, foolishly baited a heavy shark line and lowered it down. It was at once seized, and the unfortunate man actually tried to drag a



14-foot long shark, weighing many hundreds of pounds, up on to the rocks! He slipped, fell in, and was torn to pieces in a few seconds. In another case almost the same thing occurred; a fisherman, furious at losing so many fine schnapper by several of these voracious creatures which were hanging around his boat, made a thrust at one with a lance; he overreached himself, and was at once seized and devoured. In the third instance a poor half-caste lad, in endeavouring to sever the tail of a blue pointer, which was fast in a bowline alongside the boat, was knocked overboard by a blow of the tail, and was at once carried off by a second shark.

During the summer, when the so-called sea salmon swarm into the Australian tidal rivers in countless thousands, the blue pointers and a small kind of tiger shark create fearful havoc among their serried masses, and for days and days the beaches are strewn with salmon bitten in halves.

The Grey Nurse, like the White Shark, is noted for its daring ferocity. It presents some very distinct characteristics from most other varieties of the family, the principal being the shape and formation of its teeth, which alone would render easy its identification. (By some people it is erroneously called the Shovel-nose Shark, on account of the shape of its nose—the true shovel-nose shark is distinct, favours white, sandy bottoms and shallow water, is more frequently seen about ocean beaches than in harbour waters, and is not considered dangerous to bathers or people swimming. The aborigines of the east coast regard it as the best of all the family as a food, and have not the slightest fear of them.) Other names for the Grey Nurse are the Long-toothed Shark, the Wolf-toothed and the Bull Shark. In a large specimen of, say, 16 feet, the mouth is of a cavernous character, and the long awl-

like and non-serrated teeth appear to be fixed separately in the jaw-bones. The first three or four at the nose end, on either side of the upper jaw, are placed straight up and down, the remainder all curve inward; but invariably between the straight and the curved teeth there are on each side two very small teeth—looking, in fact, as if they were of recent growth. It is of such a ferocious disposition that, whenever I have been alone in a small boat and have seen a “nurse,” I have always made for the shore as quickly as possible, for it has an unpleasant trick of darting at the blade of an oar and tearing it out of the rower’s hand. It frequents shallow muddy water as much as it does the open sea or the boiling surf at the bases of rocks, or the long breaking rollers upon a sandy beach, and is always to be watched for and dreaded. An instance of the daring savagery of this creature was witnessed by a number of horrified people in Sydney a few years ago. In one of the most congested parts of the harbour, at a spot near Pyrmont Bridge, where the water is thick and filthy, a number of street arabs were bathing among a lot of floating logs of cedar connected with each other by a chain and staples and forming a sort of dock. The boys were bathing inside this barrier of timber, some of which were grounded on the muddy bottom, and some of which were well afloat. Suddenly a grey nurse sprang out of the water over the stranded logs, seized a boy and swam off with him, escaping under one of the floating logs. Many people in Sydney maintain that the fatalities occurring on the Parramatta River are caused by what is known as the ground shark, but it is the grey nurse who is the murderer. The aborigines say that the alleged ground shark of the rivers is a variety of the wobbygong, and is a nocturnal feeding and non-man-eating creature very rarely seen.

The grey nurse has a wide habitat. He is met with—to my own personal knowledge—pretty well all over the North and South Pacific, and is everywhere dreaded by both natives and whites. The only creature in its own element that it fears is the killer—that savage little minor toothed whale, *Orca Gladiator*, the bull-dog of the ocean, and the friend of the whaler. Apropos of the “killers,” I may mention that there have been hundreds of instances where, when whaleboats have been stove in or smashed by being fluked by a sperm whale and the crews were swimming for their lives or clinging to bits of the broken boat, the attendant “killers” have actually swam up to the men and smelt them, or, as the whalers say, “nosed” them, and swam off again in pursuit of the wounded whale. But to all sharks *Orca* is a deadly enemy, and attacks them fiercely as they endeavour to strip off mouthfuls of blubber from a killed whale. And it is also a strange fact that whalers have been, when capsized or stove in, surrounded by hundreds of blue pointers, and very very rarely has one of them lost his life or been even bitten. In the deep ocean the blue pointers (the “blue shark” of the deep-sea sailor) may be met with in droves; the grey nurses only in twos and threes.

On one occasion I was landing, in a whaleboat, a load of provisions for a trader on Palmerston Island. When within a hundred yards of the beach two large grey pointer sharks came up, and each tore an oar away from a native seaman. It was nearly dark, and the boat was so deeply laden that we were glad to touch the beach. Returning to the ship we lost another oar and the two brutes followed us alongside, and when the boat was being hoisted up one of them leapt clean out of the water at her. So much for the habits of the grey nurse.

Of the White Shark not so many examples are seen

or captured along the Australian sea-board. The word "white," as I have before mentioned, is a misnomer. It is probably, except the great tiger shark of the Indian Ocean, the largest of all the shark family, except the bone shark known to whalers. The Indian Ocean tiger shark I have never seen, but I can quite believe that it attains a length of forty feet, or even fifty feet, for I have seen a so-called white shark that measured twenty-four feet. At the shoulders it had the circumference of a fat bullock, and the largest teeth were two inches long and one-and-a-half in width at the base. This monster (which was of a pale bluish colour on the back, and a dirty yellowish white on the belly) was killed by a bomb lance from a whaleboat close to the reef of Pingelap (MacAskill's Island), North Pacific. It sank in ten fathoms, and the carcass was not recovered until the next day. In the stomach was a large green turtle partly digested and weighing 130 lbs., together with two small hawkbill turtle. (If I am not mistaken, the *Challenger* Deep Sea Sounding Expedition brought up in the dredge in the mid-Pacific teeth of the white shark five to six inches long and four inches wide at the base, and it was reasonably conjectured that the monster from which these fearful teeth were taken must have been from eighty feet to ninety feet in length! Furthermore, the teeth were of no great age, and it is not unlikely that at the present time there are still similar monsters in existence, ranging the ocean, as yet unseen by man. Of the existence of the mighty "bone shark" there is no doubt. These creatures have been harpooned by whalers on several occasions, but have "sounded" to such a vast depth that the lines have had to be cut to prevent the boats being dragged under. Whether it is really a "bone shark," as the whalers say, *i.e.*, an enormous toothless shark with baleen plates like the right whale, or an

unknown variety of the great "sulphur bottom" whale, may some day be known.)

In Australian waters there are at least three or four varieties of the voracious six- and seven-gilled shark. Its teeth in the upper jaw are double-pointed, and fang-like; those of the lower jaw are flat, thin and serrated with either five or seven points. Its mouth is not undershot, being at the end of the head like the wobbygong, and the seven (or six as the case may be) gills are placed vertically. On the back there is but one fin, situated far down on the "small," as the whalemen say, and the flukeless tail appears to be of an almost rudimentary character, like that of an eel, with thin "flanges" of skin extending on the under side from the tip to the ventral fin. This ranger of the seas has the most repellent odour of all the shark family that I am familiar with, and on dark nights a continuous stream of phosphorescent fluid may be seen exuding from the gill slits as it swims along. The first of these loathsome creatures I ever saw I caught one dark night from the deck of a small coasting vessel off the Manning River Heads (New South Wales). We were anchored off the bar, it having fallen calm, and I was leaning over the rail when I saw a shark about ten feet in length swimming alongside, almost on the surface, with a long stream of phosphorescent matter exuding from its gills. The captain baited his shark hook, and in a few minutes the creature was hooked and in a bowline. As we hauled it in over the side and let it fall on the deck, it vomited twenty-six young, all about six inches long. The odour of the creature was so disgusting that it made us sick. We killed it and threw it overboard, but for quite two or three days could not get rid of the smell that pervaded every rope that had any of the exudation from the gills upon it.



## THE SWAMP

WHEN the heavy depressing, north-easter which has blown so fiercely all day has died away with the setting sun, and the tumbling surf surges more gently upon the sands of Black Beach, the swamp, which has been half asleep all day, comes to life, and nature, in many voices, responds to the call of the droning sea. The eastern margin of the swamp is less than half-a-mile from Black Beach—a half-mile of high sand dunes, covered with low prickly-leaved currant bushes, that in the hot months of November and December are thickly dowered with rich, juicy fruit, which may be stripped off in handfuls like the white currants of an English garden. Here and there, amid the thicket scrub, are small clumps of golden wattle, whose sweet-perfumed blossoms burst into bloom as the currants ripen, and whose branches at early dawn are covered with swarms of mottled green and black “budgerigar” parrots, that come to play among the golden flowers when they have tired of eating the luscious currants. Merry, mischievous little sprites they are, chattering and shrieking as they crawl about the yielding branches in all sorts of positions, biting off the golden blossoms, and strewing the hot, sandy soil beneath with yellow pollen, and apparently heedless of the approaching stranger till he is within a few feet; then there is a chorused shriek of alarm, a flash of green and gold as their wings expand, and they alight on some tree 100 yards away.

Sometimes the high sand dunes that separate the swamp from the rolling billows of the blue Pacific yield



at one end of the bank to the pressure of the flood torrents that in the winter months sweep down from the forest-clad ranges, and the water bursts out through the sand banks and mingles with the sea; and then, perhaps, for many weeks the passage will remain open and the tide will flow and ebb through, bringing with it swarms of whiting and mullet—fishes that quickly accustom themselves to the change from salt to brackish water.

Back from the sea margin the swamp stretches, reed lined and reposeful, for a full five miles to the eastward, where it meets the fringe of the army of grey forest gum trees, whose lofty crests stand 200 feet above the water, and at sunset reflect themselves in it as in a mighty mirror.

Here, under the shadows of the giant gums growing upon a gently rising spur, which trends upwards to the grim main range, are the remains of an abandoned homestead, formed in the old days of the colony, when the clank of the chain gangs disturbed the silence of the forest, as the toiling convicts hewed and delved and suffered. For thirty years Gwalior, as the estate was named, flourished, with vineyards and orchards surrounding the quaint, one-storied house, and herds of cattle and sheep browsing among the sweet lush grass that everywhere lies back from the swamp. And then, one fiercely hot day in January, the bush burst into flame, and Gwalior was swept away as a leaf in the storm, and only the ruined walls of the house remained to show the chance traveller that here men had once lived.

As the sun sinks behind the rugged, purpled peaks of the main range the swamp wakes to life—the life of night, with its many strange cries of bird and beast. The flocks of black swans that during the heat of the day have been feeding and resting among the

tall reeds swim noiselessly out into the open, and then glide to and fro over the water in an aimless sort of manner. Then follow a score or so of noisy black duck, quacking loudly as they beat the water with their wings. It is surprising that they should be out at night, for from early dawn till dusk they have been feeding on green weed and the tiny crayfish that swarm amid the roots of the tall reeds and burrow in the muddy banks. Perhaps they merely want to show the stately swans that they are not the only birds that can go for a cruise at night.

Suddenly an opossum squeals from the bough of a lofty swamp gum near the ruins of the old house, and presently is answered by a dozen others. Probably he and a native bear are having a dispute over some particularly succulent young eucalyptus leaves; and then an irate and hungry dingo, prowling in search of a swan's or duck's nest, gives vent to a long, dismal and quavering howl. In an instant the swamp is quiet, and for some minutes the silence is broken only by the swish of the surf as it sheets along the hard sand of Black Beach.

## BIG JIM OF TARAWA LAGOON

OUR schooner was beating up to an anchorage off the big native village on the east side of Tarawa Lagoon when we saw Big Jim coming off to us in his whale-boat.

"Don't let him get filled up on board this time," said the skipper to me.

"How nicely you talk," I retorted angrily; "any-one would think you were speaking of some puling infant, and that I was its nurse. You might as well offer a lamb to a hungry tiger and ask the beast not to hurt it as to ask Jim Gordon to keep sober when there's liquor to be had."

Big Jim was one of the three resident traders on Tarawa, which is one of the Gilbert Group of islands; the two other men were Chinese, and Jim gave them a beating regularly once a month—"just to keep the yaller swine in their places," as he said. Jim and I were old friends, and whenever we met he would give me such a handshake that all the bad words I knew would pour from my lips in an uninterrupted volley for two minutes, and then Jim would lean back, spread out his mighty chest and utter a bellow-like roar, which he thought was a laugh. Then he would proceed to get drunk, and keep so for two days, and his native wife would thrash him with a bamboo until she was tired. At the end of forty-eight hours Jim would drink a small bottle of Worcester sauce, shave himself, put on a suit of spotless white ducks, and look what he really was at heart—a gentleman.

Filey Bay was Jim's birthplace, and he came from

a family which had been smugglers for two hundred years. And he was proud of it, as proud as he was of his six feet two inches of manhood, his enormous strength, and his long yellow moustache. What had brought him to the South Seas does not matter. In his younger days he had been a North Sea Pilot—that much he told me. Then in the early “seventies” I met him for the first time at the Pelaw Islands, where he had settled as a trader. Years passed, and again we met sometimes at one island, sometimes at another. Then I landed him on Tarawa to trade for the firm which employed me as supercargo.

\* \* \* \* \*

The boat spun over the lagoon, and Big Jim ran alongside the schooner and clambered over the rail. He crushed the skipper's and my hands in the usual manner, and then told us that we were keeping too far to the northward and would soon be in shallow water.

“Mind your own business, Jim. We know this lagoon better than you do. Been on the spree lately?”

“No. Been as sober as a judge for three months. Wife has a baby boy. And I want you—and me too—to drink the kid's health.”

We could not refuse. Leaving the mate in charge of the deck we went below, and in ten minutes Jim had taken two tumblerfuls of Hennessy—neat. It was pitiable. To expostulate with the man was useless.

“There you are, Jim. There's the bottle to yourself. Now stay here, and don't come fooling about on deck. We want to beat up to the village before dark.”

“Well, of all the unsociable hogs of supercargoes I ever met you take the cake. Clear out on deck and run your old hooker ashore—and then you'll be cackling for me to come and help you out of a mess. And I won't budge.”

"Wife quite strong again, Jim?" asked the skipper as he turned to go on deck.

"You bet. She's as chipper as a sand-boy."

"Glad to hear it. We'll lend her a hand to give you an extra good whaling to-morrow."

\* \* \* \* \*

For two hours we continued to beat up the lagoon through a series of heavy rain squalls. Then Jim burst up out of the cabin like a tornado—smilingly, jocularly intoxicated.

"Well, of all the bloomin' idiots,—" he reached with both hands and dragged the captain and myself to him, "you fellows are so full of liquor that you don't know what you are doing." Then he spun aside and yelled out to the second mate for the lead line.

"Give it to him, Peters," said the skipper, "let him have his way and don't take any notice."

Peters brought him the deep-sea lead instead of the hand line. "There you are, Mr Gordon! Don't hurt yourself."

"Don't you worry. I'll save the ship, sonny. Come on shore to-night and see my kid."

He clambered up into the starboard quarter boat, steadied his huge body, and then made ready for a cast just as a blinding rain squall swept down upon us and the schooner ripped through the water like a torpedo boat.

"Watch, there, watch," he bellowed, and he hove the heavy lead. It went clean through the after-side of the galley and nearly killed the Chinaman cook, who put his head out of the galley door and yelled—

"What the hell a you wantee makee?"

Big Jim then fell overboard.

We brought-to and lowered a boat, and picked him up. He abused everyone profoundly for some minutes.

Then, after another drink, he consented to lie down and rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jim's wife did not exercise her rights on this occasion, for the big man was very penitent and I interceded and made peace. She was a little, slenderly-built Bonin Island Portuguese half-caste, with a sweetly youthful and oval face. But she loved the big man, and now that she had a son was ready to, and did, forgive much.

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Nearly twelve months had passed before we again came into Tarawa Lagoon. Jim's house was closed. And one of the Chinese traders told us the end of the story.

"Misse Jim and little baby catch him smallpox from Honolulu missionary ship and die. Then Big Jim make number one chop coffin, and put Misse and baby inside, and carry down to his whaleboat. Then he go and beat white missionary, beat him welly hard. Oh, my word! he swear too muchee. Then he say good-bye to everybody, get into boat, hoist sail and go away with Misse and lil' baby. He sail right out to sea befo' stlong bleeze."

\* \* \* \* \*

And never again was Big Jim of Tarawa seen.



# SHIPWRECK MEMORIES

## I

### THE LITTLE MAID, AIANA

THERE is before me now as I write a native amulet of pearl shell, which has been in my possession for more than a score of years, and, as I watch its iridescence under the soft glow of the lamplight, it calls forth old, old memories, and I see once more the sweet oval face of her to whom it belonged. Poor Aiana—her bones lie a thousand fathoms deep somewhere between Samoa and the lofty isles of the Solomon Group.

Aiana, when I first met her, was a child of six or seven years of age, and lived with her parents at the town of Fale-a-lupo, situated on the extreme western point of the island of Savai'i, the largest of the Samoan Islands. My partner and I in those days had a small cutter, in which we made trading cruises all through the Group—from Manua to the east, to Savai'i in the west—calling in at the many villages, and bartering our trade goods for either copra, arrowroot or cash.

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It was a very, very happy life, and in the course of twelve months we made many native friends. Sometimes, starting from that wondrously beautiful harbour of Pago Pago on Tutuila, we would run along the south coast of Upola, staying a day or two at each town, enjoying the hospitality of our friends and doing business as well. Then we would start off for the next

village—perhaps only a few hours' sail away—run close in up to the shining beach, and let go our anchor in water as clear as crystal. At times we would remain in some quiet little harbour for a week, spending our days on shore with the amiable, hospitable people on fishing or shooting excursions, or “lazing” the hours away in the village, drinking kava, and watching the girls and young men dance, or listening to the old men's tales—tales of old Samoan days, ere the first white men were seen and looked upon as gods.

Ah! those indeed were happy days, and will for ever remain in my memory to the last. Alan, my partner, was a Polynesian half-caste, proud of his white father (even though he could not remember him, for he had died when Alan was an infant), but in all other things he was a Samoan of Samoans, for he had spent most of his life among them. His mother was a native of Manahiki, an island far to the north-east of Samoa, and men who had seen her told me that she was a very beautiful woman. Alan himself was a remarkably handsome man of four-and-twenty years of age, good-tempered, a splendid sailor man, and, being unmarried, was an extraordinarily great favourite with the single girls—and the average Samoan girl is a born flirt. We would very often take a *malaga* or travelling party of a score of young men and women on board the cutter, and give them a passage to some other town on the coast, where they would stay for a few weeks, and await the cutter's return. We never charged them for their passages, but we were more than paid by the amount of food they insisted upon us accepting—pigs, poultry and pigeons, yams, oranges, pineapples and bananas. Very often, indeed, there was no room on deck for the presents we were continually receiving, and the ratlines were crowded with bunches of bananas suspended therefrom, for we were quite unable to eat

them fast enough. Our crew consisted of four natives of Niué (Savage Island), good, steady men who had been with me for two years, and were much attached to my partner and myself. Poor Alan! He, too, lies far below in a sailor's grave.

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One day, towards sunset, we came to Fale-a-lupo. I had never before been there, and was anxious to make the acquaintance of the people, who were about the only community unknown to me in Samoa. Alan, however, knew them well, and we were received most hospitably, and invited to sup with the chiefs and people in the *fale faipule*, or town house, that evening. After the supper was over I was introduced to a number of our entertainers, and among them was a native dressed like an European. I saw at once that he was not a Samoan, and, in reply to my inquiry, he told me that he was a Rarotongan, but having married a Samoan woman he had settled down in her native town of Fale-a-lupo. He had, he said, one child, a little girl of six years of age. Would I come to his house in the morning and breakfast? he asked.

"I should be pleased if you will," he said earnestly. "You see I am a sailor, and I have seen many countries, and sailed in English, American and German ships. And I have all my discharges, and my wife and I will be honoured if you will come and eat with us."

"Thank you, Teroa; I shall come. I have many friends in Rarotonga, and we will talk together of them. Then, after we have eaten, I should like to go and shoot *tuli* (plover); I am told that there are many at Fale-a-lupo."

"It is true. There are many—those with the golden wings. And my little girl shall show you the best place. It is two miles from the town and back from

the beach, and there is good cover. But why shoot *tuli* when there are plenty of pigeons in the forest?"

I laughed. "I am tired of pigeons, Teroa, and I have not tasted *tuli* for a month."

Early next morning, leaving Alan to begin trading operations, I took my gun and bag, and went on shore. Teroa's house was situated in a grove of *ifi* (chestnut) trees quite a mile from the village. It was surrounded by a fence of white palings, and without and within presented a delightful appearance. Teroa and his wife and child met me as I opened the gate, and gave me a warm welcome, and then the woman and child disappeared to go to the cooking shed. In about ten minutes they, with two young Samoan girls, returned with a hot breakfast—two baked fowls, some pigeons, and a noble fish of the mullet species, together with some beautifully-cooked bread-fruit and taro. I do not think I ever ate a better breakfast, and when my kind host begged me to have some fruit as a finishing course I had to implore him to excuse me.

After the meal was over I took out my pipe and a plug of tobacco, and was about to cut up a pipeful, when my hostess asked me if I would not have a *sului* (cigarette) instead, and meanwhile she and the girls would cut up enough tobacco for me to last the day. Politeness demanded the acceptance of the offer, and I handed over my pipe, tobacco-pouch and knife. Then little Aiana lit and handed me a cigarette of native tobacco rolled in dry banana leaf, and as she did so I saw what I had not before noticed—one of the most beautiful child faces I have ever seen. It was like a picture by Greuze. Her hair—wavy, glossy and dark—was wound about the small head in a crown-like, yet careless fashion, showing only the lower part of the smooth forehead and entirely hiding her ears. Her features were faultless in their perfect regularity, and

well matched the dark, Spanish-like complexion and big, long-lashed eyes—eyes that seemed years and years older than the lithe, childish figure, for they were full of a strange, appealing look, as if the soul itself rested therein, and sought to speak.

“Wilt guide me to where the *tuli* are, Aiana?” I asked.

The dark eyes lit up, and the red lips parted in a smile of pleasure. Aye, indeed she would, and in a few seconds she had donned her gayest *teputa*—a garment like a Mexican poncho, with fringed edges of silk and a round hole in the centre so that it could be slipped over the head. Then her mother took four young drinking coconuts and some food, and placed them in a basket, and off we started, skirting the rear of the village, and then emerging out upon the beach to meet the cool breath of the trade wind, and see the long line of surf foaming upon the reef.

My pretty little companion was silent at first, and only answered my questions with shy monosyllables, but her reserve soon wore off, and she clapped her hands and uttered a delighted *Aue!* when I got a quick shot at a number of plover that whirred past us, and dropped three. She dashed into the shallow water, picked them up, and brought them to me, pityingly stroking their shining backs as she laid them in my bag.

In an hour I had shot all I wanted. Then we sat down, under the shade of a pandanus palm, just at high-water mark, drank a coconut each, and watched the incoming tide swirling along the beach. Presently Aiana rose and looked intently at something she saw coming towards the shore. Then she crouched down and beckoned me in a whisper to bring my gun.

“Look,” she said her eyes sparkling with excitement, “it is a great gar-fish. ’Tis more than half a fathom long.”

It was indeed a splendid gar, quite four feet in length, and as thick as a man's arm. It came swimming in right ahead very slowly, then suddenly it turned and made off quickly along the water-line to the right, but not quick enough to escape some shot in the head and back. Turning over on its side, it sank, and in a few seconds Aiana had it by the tail, and drew it ashore—a bar of gleaming green and silver. This ended the morning's sport, and we returned to the village well content.

"Aiana," I said to her next day as I bade her good-bye, "here is an amulet for you to wear round your neck with your pretty *teputa*. Do not lose it, little one."

"Nay, indeed," she replied as she took the shining toy and slipped it over her dark tresses, "whence came it, *alii*?"

"From Ponāpe, an island far, far to the north-west. I have had it for many years."

It was nearly five years before I saw my little friend again. Alan and I had parted—he to become a resident trader in the Marshall Islands, and I a supercargo in a San Francisco trading barque. Then one day, as I was walking along the main street of Apia, I met Aiana and her parents. She was, if possible, more beautiful in her budding womanhood than she had been as a child. They greeted me affectionately and asked me to go to their house, for they were now living in Apia, where Teroa was employed as an overseer by a German firm.

"Have you the amulet yet, Aiana?" I inquired as we walked along the street to their dwelling.

She smiled brightly, and took it out from the bosom of her white muslin gown.

I stayed and had supper with my friends, and then bade them good-bye, as my ship was to sail at daylight for Fiji.



"You will not fail to come to see us again when you next come to Samoa?" said Teroa, as he held my hand in his. I promised I would not fail, and so we parted.

But when six months later I again found myself in Apia I learned that the family had gone from Samoa. Teroa had been sent away by the German firm to open a trading station on the great island of New Britain. He had left a letter for me at the Consul's office, saying that he was engaged for three years, and would then return to Samoa, where he hoped we should again meet. "Aiana and her mother join their love to you with mine," he wrote.

It so happened that our very next voyage was to Mioko, or Duke of York's Island, a small cluster lying between New Ireland and New Britain. Teroa, I was told in Samoa, had gone to a place called Blanche Bay—only a few hours' sail from Mioko, and I determined, if possible, to pay them a visit. But when we reached Mioko, I was grieved to hear from a German trader there that the vessel in which my friends had sailed from Samoa was missing.

"She's gone. There's no doubt about it. She left Samoa in April, and ought to have been in Blanche Bay three weeks later, and it is now September. Most likely she foundered, for she was very old and as rotten as an over-ripe pear."

It had been, even then, my lot to lose many dear friends and comrades by the sea; but I had to turn my face away when I knew that I should never see again my innocent little friend of the old days at Fale-a-lupo.

"Perhaps," I said, "some of them may be safe. They may have got to one of the Solomon Islands, and be living there now."

The trader shook his head. "No. The *Iserbrook*, brig, has made a thorough search, but not even a bit of a spar has been found anywhere."

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Once more we were back in Levuka, Fiji, and I was talking to an acquaintance on the jetty, when a boat from an island trading brig named the *Restless*, pulled up to the steps. She was manned by Rotumah men, and was in charge of a man I knew well—Tom D'Arcy, who was chief mate. The moment he saw me he sprang up the steps, followed by one of his crew, a sturdy young lad about seventeen years of age. Just as D'Arcy and I were shaking hands I caught sight of something on the native boy's copper-brown chest that made me start. It was Aiana's amulet.

"What is the matter, old man?" cried D'Arcy, as, dropping his hand, I began to ply the boy with questions. "Oh, that bit of pearl shell. Take it if you want it. The skipper gave it to him."

"Where did he get it?" I asked eagerly, as the boy took off the amulet and handed it to me.

"We found it in a drifting boat four months ago. It was lying on the bosom of a dead girl—Samoan, I think. There were seven people in all, two white men, and five natives. They had all died of thirst and starvation, poor creatures. There was nothing to show who they were, but the skipper took that bit of pearl shell from the girl's neck and told this boy he could keep it. Do you know it?"

"Yes, it was once mine."

## II

### "FRANK," THE TRADER

As I sit here writing, and turning over the leaves of my old log-books and island diaries, I can see from my study windows a pretty wide expanse of the English Channel, dotted over with craft of many kinds—a French fishing fleet (I am looking from the French coast), eight or ten steamers of all nations, and a big barque in tow of a tug, taking her to Cherbourg. The barque is painted grey—a favourite colour in the French mercantile marine, and a colour that I hate for ships though I think it beautiful for women—that is, of course, for some women. I love to see a pretty woman dressed in pearly grey—I hate to see a grey-painted ship, no matter whether she be a beautiful yacht-like creation, or a clumsy old tank, like the barque now being tugged across my line of vision, for grey has always been an unlucky colour for me.

I have written of my innocent little Samoan maid Aiana. She sailed to her death in a German schooner named the *Manono*, which was painted grey, as were all the German inter-island trading schooners in those days, as well as the larger Hamburg ships. Grey was the colour of the *Susannah Godeffroy* as my tug came alongside her in Newcastle Harbour in New South Wales and I bade farewell to her skipper, Troop, who was an old shipmate of mine, and wished him *bon voyage* to San Francisco, whither he was bound with a ship's company of sixteen hands and twenty passengers.

Grey were the faces of Troop and many others when they were washed ashore after the *Susannah Godeffroy*, ill-found, soft-timbered, and badly put together (like all cheaply-built German sailing ships of that time), was driven on a lee shore twenty miles from her port of sailing, and all on board perished.

I hate grey—on ships.

Grey-painted was the *Orchid*, brigantine, when she came into Nukutipipi Lagoon to take me and my belongings to the Caroline Islands in the North West Pacific.

Nearly twelve months before I had been beguiled into settling in Nukutipipi as a resident trader. The natives, with the local Samoan teacher as their spokesman, met me at a public meeting, and told me that the island produced two hundred tons of copra annually, which they would sell to me solely, if my trade goods were to their liking, and I would pay cash as well. Now I had nearly five thousand dollars' worth of trade, and over one thousand dollars in cash, and looked forward to doing a very profitable business. First of all, however, I made an inspection of the eight or nine islands which comprise the atoll, and was satisfied that they would yield nearly two hundred tons of copra annually. So thereupon I had a house built, and settled down in comfort. I liked the people. They were a genial, hospitable, good-natured set of liars, and went to church every morning on week days, and five times on Sundays.

For a few months I did very well, the natives bringing in their copra freely, and we were getting on splendidly together when one day there sailed into the lagoon a German barque from Samoa, and I received a shock.

The German supercargo came on shore to see me, and after drinking a quart or two of lager beer, politely

asked me if I was aware of the fact that I had no right to be trading on the island buying copra which belonged to his firm. And in proof of his assertions he produced an authentic document signed by the Samoan teacher, and ten leading natives, whereby they had agreed in consideration of seven hundred dollars' worth of timber and windows and doors for the new church (to be supplied by the German firm) to sell their copra to the aforesaid German firm only for a term of two years. The agreement was dated about sixteen months back, was written in both English and Samoan, and was duly stamped with the seal of the German Consulate at Samoa.

I saw that I had been taken in and would have to go—and to be made a fool of by natives, and have to give way to a hated German rival was a bitter pill for an Englishman to swallow. But there was no help for it.

With the German supercargo, who was a big, fat, good-natured man (though I could see he was trying hard to suppress chuckling at my chagrin) I went to the “town house,” where all the natives were assembled, looking very solemn and uncomfortable. The pastor was not present. We asked for him, and was told that his reverence was ill—he was makariri (had a chill) and could not leave his bed.

“You are all lying,” I remarked, as the German and I sat down on a mat placed for us, “I saw him an hour ago, with his fishing-rod in his hand, going along the beach. Send to him and tell him to come here quickly, so that this matter can be settled. And tell him to bring me the thirty dollars he owes me.”

The German backed me up, and in a few minutes the teacher appeared. And then began a most wonderful wrangle, and considerable lying; the natives and the teacher swearing by all that was holy that they did not understand the agreement that they had signed,

although the teacher himself had drafted it. Also that they had quite forgotten the matter, and were honest, God-fearing people, and that they felt bitterly hurt at my calling them a pack of liars. Would not the German nobleman take the seven hundred dollars they owed him—although they did not understand why they owed it—and go away and then all would be well.

The German nobleman was obdurate. He spoke Samoan fluently, and went to business at once—first giving me an unobserved wink.

“If you do not keep to our agreement, I shall send a German man-of-war here, and your miserable little island will be blown out of the water.”

That decided them to stick to the German; so I returned to my house, and wrote out a notice in native to the effect that I had suspended business, would neither buy nor sell, wanted all who owed me anything to pay up, and concluded by stating that the people, from the teacher down to the youngest child who could speak, were a community of liars and thieves, and would meet with eternal damnation. I nailed the notice outside my door, and began to feel better.

The German barque sailed next day, and then for the next two months I exercised my patience in waiting for another ship to call and take me away to some other island. I did not care much where, as long as it was some place where there were mountains and forests and rivers, and where I should again hear the shrill cry of the wild mountain cock and the booming note of the great purple pigeon; for I was deadly sick of the low-lying sandy atolls of the Ellice, Gilbert and Marshall Islands, and their fish and coconut-eating inhabitants. I had had three years of it, and the monotony of my daily life was beginning to tell upon my nerves. There was absolutely nothing to do but wrangle with the natives over trading matters, or



devote myself to deep-sea fishing, and fond as I was of the latter sport, I had become tired of it, and longed to once more tread the thick carpet of leaves in the cool aisles of the mountain forest, and hear the sweet music of rushing water hurrying and brawling on its way to the sea.

Nearly eight weeks had passed since I had closed my trading station, and then one morning a grey-painted brigantine came into the passage and dropped anchor abreast of my house. I went on board, and found that she was the *Orchid* (nick-named the *Torpid*), bound nowhere in particular, but ready to go anywhere where her skipper and supercargo thought they could sell the old second-hand, or rather fourth-hand rubbish, they had on board, and which they called trade goods. It had been purchased at Cheap Jack auctions in Sydney or Auckland, sent to Fiji—and Fiji jeered at it—then to Samoa, who sneered at it, and now finally was being carried to the equatorial islands, in the hope that it could be got rid of in some way or another.

I soon came to an arrangement with the skipper for a passage to Yap in the Western Carolines, and two days later we sailed for our destination viâ the Line Islands. The *Torpid* was almost a new ship, and was the slowest vessel I ever sailed in. When close-hauled she sagged to leeward as fast as she went ahead, and missed stays five times out of ten when going about, unless there was half a gale of wind blowing. In addition to this her skipper was a very indifferent navigator, but nevertheless had an inordinate opinion of himself as a wonderfully clever one. In the course of a few days I determined to leave the brigantine at the first island at which we touched, for I felt morally certain that it would be nothing short of a miracle if she ever reached the Caroline Islands, with such a

hopeless creature in command. I took the mate into my confidence.

"Best thing you can do. The little beast is no more fitted to handle a square-rigged vessel than I am to take holy orders. You see, he has been in fore-and-aft vessels all his life until he got command of this hooker. She is a brute of a thing for a good man to handle, but with such a rank duffer as that monkey-faced little ass—" He stopped and expectorated over the side in disgust.

"Do you know," he went on, "that we have been ashore three times since we left Sydney. One rainy night we plumped right on to the reef at Pylstaart Island in the Tonga Group; but managed to get off again, as there was no sea on. I had told him that we ought to sight the island about midnight if it cleared up, but the little hound sniggered, and said we should pass thirty miles to windward. Then we missed stays going into Vavau Harbour and went ashore and stuck there four days, and the last time he did a noble thing, and he and I had words over it. Have you noticed his eye?"

"Yes, I have. Looks as if he had been given a fearful smack. His cheek is discoloured half-way down."

The mate grinned. "Yes—and I only gave him one, but it sent him flying off the topgallant foc'scle on to the windlass."

"What did he do? I mean what was the 'noble thing'?"

"It was three weeks ago. We ran into Funafuti Lagoon before a strong breeze, and with a four-knot current. I was for'ard busy with the ground tackle, and wondering why the skipper did not take in sail, for we were going along at a great rate, with a reef on each side of us, and the place where we had to bring up only a little over a mile or so away. But there was

the measly little monkey strutting up and down the poop like an admiral, smoking a cigarette, and the crew and I thought he meant to run us slap up on the beach. Suddenly he seemed to realise what he was doing, yelled out to let go everything, and himself let go the mainsail throat and peak halliards—just the one sail that he ought to have left alone. Then the next moment he screamed to me to let go.

"‘Let go, let go!’ he shouted, frantically dancing from one side of the poop to the other, ‘let go, and let her overrun the cable. Do you want us to go ashore?’

"Telling him he was an illuminated idiot, I obeyed the order, and the cable flew out of the hawse-pipe like a streak of greased lightning. We were then in about six fathoms when the anchor touched the coral bottom, and almost in as many seconds the 45 fathoms of chain flaked out were gone; there was a bit of a jerk, and then it parted, and we ran smack against a coral ‘mushroom’ boulder, with such force that every man on board went down on his back. Then up came the little man, white as a sheet with fright, and began to blame me, so I hauled off and gave him something to remember me by. But he’s beastly polite to me now."

"So I notice," I said, "but it is a pity you did not knock his monkeyish head off his shoulders, or break a rib or two at least, so as to lay him up for a month or two."

For the next two or three days after this conversation the brigantine kept on a N.N.W. course, the captain intending to make the great lagoon island of Apamama his first point of call, and there I decided to go on shore and stay with Bob Randolph the white trader until another ship came along, bound to the Carolines. The weather was not at all pleasant, incessant rain squalls day and night, and the mate had a strict look-out kept when it was his watch at night, for

all the Line Islands are very low—mere sand-banks in fact, and barely visible in daylight from the deck at a distance of ten miles.

At four in the morning I heard the mate come below to turn in, and the captain went on deck, and altered the course a couple of points—as I could see by the tell-tale over the cabin table. It was raining at the time, and the *Torpid* was going her best, for the wind was strong, and she was running free with yards squared—her only good sailing point.

Neither the mate nor I could sleep, for we were both slightly anxious on account of the skipper having kept away two points, which would bring us needlessly close to the island of Nanouti. I was sitting in the mate's cabin, and was just rising to go on deck and have a look at the weather, when we heard the second mate shout :

“Hard down, hard down!” and then as we both sprang to the companion way the brigantine struck with a crash, rolled over to port, and great smashing seas thundered down upon her decks in quick succession. In ten minutes she was hopelessly bilged, and to add to the confusion, and to the roar of the breakers and the grinding and crashing of the ship's timbers against the jagged reef on which she had struck, a blinding rain squall obscured the dawn. The little skipper, too terrified to even give any orders, was clinging to the upper end of the fife rail, clad in his pyjamas. A native seaman, springing up the poop ladder, in passing him, gave him a sweeping-handed blow with his open hand, and sent him staggering against the lee rail.

“Get over the lee side upon the reef, *pala-ai* (coward), and save thy worthless life,” the native seaman shouted in Samoan, “for even an *anufe* (worm) like thee can crawl to the land, for the tide is low.”

The “worm” did crawl to the land, led by another

member of the native crew. And then Mason, the chief mate, and Johansen, the second mate, the crew, and my native servant Paia ("the Holy") secured all that was of value in the cabin, and carried everything out upon the reef, which was now uncovered and bare, for the brigantine had struck upon the reef at the last of the ebb. I succeeded in saving all my personal effects—clothes, guns and ammunition, 600 Chile dollars, and also a cat which was an old comrade. But all my trade goods in the hold were lost to me, for a few hours after sunset, a thundering surf battered the *Torpid* to pieces, and her owner's worthless Brummagem Cheap Jack stuff shared the same fate as my beautiful China silks, musical boxes, Winchester and other rifles and carbines, and silk ribbons at two dollars the fathom.

I can jest at it now, but it was bitter to me then, for I had had high hopes for the future, and now all was gone but a few hundred dollars.

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I took up my quarters with the one white trader on the island, who made me very welcome. His name was "Frank," and he had the reputation of being a "tough." Now I have found that one can always test a white man's reputation by hearing what the natives say of him, and their conduct to him, and I had not been in Frank's house an hour when I knew that he was both feared and respected. He was a native of Tarragona, but had left home when he was a boy of twelve, and, making his way to New York, entered the American Navy. At the outbreak of the war, he deserted and went over to the Confederates, served throughout the war in the rebel fleet, and was in the *Merrimac* in the memorable engagement with the

*Monitor* in Hampton Roads. Then at the end of the war he drifted to the South Seas.

Six feet all but an inch in height, and with a chest like a draught horse, he was one of the finest built men I have ever seen, and unlike nearly all foreigners, knew how to use his hands, and his ill-deserved reputation as a "tough" arose through his killing a man in a prize fight in San Francisco with only one blow. He struck his opponent on the forehead, and fractured his skull, which so enraged some of the villainous P.R. fraternity present, that as he was leaving the hall, he received two pistol shots in the back, and for many weeks his life hung in the balance. When he recovered, he made his way to Honolulu, and from there to the islands of the Equatorial Pacific. He made a very good living, not only by his honest way of trading, but through being an excellent boatbuilder and blacksmith.

About a week after the loss of the *Torpid*, a Sydney schooner touched at the island, and the "measly little hound" and his ship's company went away in her, much to my satisfaction, for every time I met the captain something like a murderous feeling took possession of me at the thought that I was a ruined man through his ignorance and incompetence as a sailor man and navigator. I had never spoken to him but once since the loss of the brigantine, and that was when he one day came to the house and asked to see me. I was asleep at the time, and when Frank's pretty half-caste daughter came and awakened me, and told me who it was that had disturbed my slumber, I was not pleased, nor disposed to be courteous.

"Will you please look at the palm of my hand? There is a white swelling in the palm, and the pain is so intense that I cannot sleep, and I know you will do all you can for me." (I had some reputation as a rough-and-ready surgeon with the natives, and saw



that the man was in a terrible funk over his hand, which was simply festering through a small piece of copper or Muntz metal having been driven in deep into the flesh on the night of the wreck.)

"Your hand will have to come off if you want to live," I said; and then, turning to Frank, I asked him to bring his carpenter's broad-axe, a sharp knife, some hot Stockholm tar, and some bandages.

The little skipper fled, but Frank, much as he also disliked the man, went after him, brought him back and lanced his hand. Then the trader, after addressing a short homily to him on his minor faults and general uselessness, led him to the door and ran him outside.

During the next month I forgot my misfortunes through that wonderful remedy for all mental trouble—physical labour. My friend was building a small cutter, and I was glad to help him, and learn something of the art of ship and boat building, and our workman comradeship was a very pleasant one. Frank had two wives, and several sturdy children by each. One wife lived with him at the head station (where I also dwelt, and the other had charge of an out-station at the other end of the island. There was not the slightest jealousy between them, their children living in one house as much as in the other, and the two women seemed to vie with each other as to who could do most for their husband. The wife at the head station was a fine-built, stout woman of forty, a native of Apamama, an excellent house-wife, and always brim full of good-humour. The other was under twenty years of age, remarkably handsome, and the mother of three children.

Frank was a great fisherman, and was especially fond of harpooning the great ray-fish, which were numerous off the barrier reef. These monstrous and dangerous creatures yielded a valuable oil, which we tried out,

and then put into casks to sell to trading vessels. Generally known as the "Devil-fish," the natives were very cautious about approaching them too closely, for there were many instances of men swimming in the sea being suddenly enveloped by one of the creature's wings and dragged below to be devoured.\*

The lagoon teemed with fish, none of which were poisonous, as is the case in many of the islands to the north, and very often I would spend the greater part of the night out upon the placid water, returning home with the canoe laden to swamping point. But I think that my chief enjoyment was the making of a vegetable garden. The island, I must mention, is very low—in fact, an oblong-shaped line of sand-bank densely covered with coco-palms on three sides, and a reef, bare at low water, forming the fourth, and so completely enclosing the lagoon. The soil, though sandy, was yet well mixed with vegetable mould in some places, and a coarse vegetable called puraka thrived well in it.

One day a little Auckland schooner named the *Coquette* touched at the island on her way to Samoa, and I bought an entire box of Californian seeds—vegetable and flower—from the captain.

"Frank," I said, "I am going to start a market garden at the back of the boat-shed, but I want a lot of soil—four feet deep."

"Take a couple of pounds of tobacco out of the store-room, cut it up into pieces an inch long, and the native children will bring you tons of soil."

The town crier was summoned, and he came with

\* In Charles Kingsley's "At Last" he relates how the late Colonel Hamilton Smith saw at the Monos Boca, in the West Indies, a ray rise at a sailor who had fallen overboard, "cover him with one of his broad wings, and sweep him down into the depths."

his conch shell and listened to my request. In a few minutes he stepped out into the village square, and gave a terrific blast through the shell, summoning all the young people. Then he cried his cry.

"The white man Rui wants 500 baskets of *kele*, and will pay for each a piece of tobacco."

Wild excitement! Yells, shouts! In five minutes every child in the village had seized a leaf basket, and was off to a spot half-a-mile away, where under a species of *Barringtonia* tree the soil was a rich black mould.

The making and planting of that garden was a source of never-ending pleasure to me. I worked at it from dawn to dusk, dreamt of it at night, and watched the coming up of the seeds with a childish delight. It brought back to me old, old memories of the home of my boyhood, when my brothers and I were each given a small plot of land to cultivate, and our parents bought the vegetables we grew.

It was delicious, this South Sea garden of mine, and I was a minor *Cincinnatus*. Had a ship bound to the Carolines then come along, ready to take me, burning as I was with the *auri sacra fames*, I believe I should have refused.

In three months my garden—I called it mine—was a picture. I had carrots, turnips, radishes, broad and French beans, peas and onions, and Frank and I for a long time after revelled in an ample supply of fresh vegetables with the everlasting tinned beef and mutton that had hitherto—with the exception of fresh fish and pork—formed our daily fare. I shall always remember with pride how I one day carried in triumph to the house a huge ripe water-melon, the first I had seen since leaving Samoa three years previously. And yet, ingrates that we were, we wished we had potatoes—as well as the other vegetables!

The time passed by all too quickly, and then one day we heard the roar of many voices.

"*Te kaibuke, te kaibuke!*" (A ship, a ship!), and a barque flying American colours came sailing round the south point of the island. In half-an-hour I was on board, and had made arrangements for my passage to the Carolines. I found it hard to say farewell to my friends, and little thought we should never meet again.

I heard, long afterwards, that my poor friend removed to another island (Peru), and whilst there he accepted an offer to accompany 200 natives to San Jose de Guatamala as overseer and interpreter. They were to work on a plantation there. The vessel in which they sailed was a crazy old, over-masted brigantine named the *Tahiti Maid*. She was never heard of again; doubtless she capsized in a squall, and every soul on board perished.

### III

## BILL GARDE, OF VELLA LAVELLA

A BITTER wintry wind was churning the grey waters of San Francisco Bay into foam, and whistling shrilly through the cordage of nearly two score vessels of all sizes and rigs that were lying alongside the old Long Wharf, then standing between the ends of Third and Fourth Streets. Most of them were lumber carriers from Puget Sound—ancient, disreputable-looking craft, old harridans of the sea, with bow ports so worn from constant “fleeting” through of the mighty baulks of red pine that one wondered how they could be ever made even fairly water-tight again for the outgoing voyage along the gale-swept coasts of Northern California and Oregon in the roaring winter-time. Several of them had Norwegian wind-mill pumps—they wanted them when they set out on the return voyage with a heavy load of sawn planks above, reaching to the sheer-poles with but a narrow alley-way between each side. Such God-forsaken-looking specimens of seagoing craft, with an unwritten “Cheap Burial for Sailor Men” upon their bulging, coal-tarred topsides and half-open seams, with draglets of blackened oakum hanging down, and “Starvation, Hard-work, Misery and Hell” blazoned out in the clumsy standing and the many-spliced running gear, the battered deck-houses, the rickety galley, the zig-zag bulwarks, with the worn-out top-rail, and stanchions wedged into the rotting waterways to keep them firm—nothing about such sea-coffins to please the eye but the clean white American cotton

canvas neatly stowed on yard and fore and aft spars, or brailed up against the lower masts.

But, here and there among these lines of played-out old-coffin sea-punchers, were other and more pleasing craft—winged messengers of the ocean—to look at and admire, as a man admires a sweet and gracious woman.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was, as I have said, a bitter wintry day, but I had left my lodgings early on that Sunday morning on a quest. I had seen in the previous day's *Alta California* that a certain barquentine, then lying at the Long Wharf, was to sail in a few days for the Marquesas Islands, and I wanted—and had been waiting—to go to the South Seas, either as a passenger, or as an ordinary seaman, for many weeks. For I was very young and had already seen some of the isles of the Pacific, and wanted to go there again, even though I knew that my elders and betters would strongly disapprove of my so doing—when they heard of it. But I was pretty sure that they would *not* hear of it for at least a year, and I meant to write them all conciliatory and intelligent letters, telling them how much better it would be for me to go to sea and become a trader and learn navigation, and get thousands of pounds' worth of pearl shell, and buy an island filled with gorgeous trees, bearing fruits of all kinds, and build a beautiful house, wherein all my kith and kin should dwell for the term of their natural lives—instead of my going into a commercial house in San Francisco at \$100 per month. But I was very young, and alas! forgot to write those letters. Had I done so they would have at least made some people happy, as well as unhappy—happy that I should write so lovingly, and unhappy that I could be such a young fool.

\* \* \* \* \*

As I walked slowly down the Long Wharf I caught



sight of a sweet little English barque named the *Gazelle*. She was a wooden ship, quite new, and carried double-topgallant-sails—just then coming into fashion. As I stood gazing at her beautiful lines a heavy squall of rain swept across the harbour from the Oakland side, and I saw that I should get a soaking unless I found shelter somewhere. On the quarter-deck of the barque was an awning with deep weather cloths on each side, and underneath I could see two hammocks slung. I called out to the only man I could see on deck, and asked if I might come on board, and shelter. He gave a ready assent, and in a few minutes the rain descended in torrents. The man, I found, was the second mate, and we were soon smoking and talking in his cabin, which was on deck. He was a pleasant, handsome young fellow of about 22 years of age. I told him my name, and he gave me his, and told me he was the captain's brother.

"Come aft with me and see him," said my new friend. "It is Sunday, and there is nothing doing on board. Nearly all the hands are on shore on liberty. My brother will be glad to meet an Englishman in this rotten hole of inquiry."

We went aft under the awning, and I was introduced to Captain Dolland and his wife, who were lying in their hammocks. She was a Japanese—one of the sweetest, daintiest little women imaginable, and in ten minutes the four of us were chatting away as if we were old friends.

"You must stay to dinner," said the captain.

I said I should be delighted, but I first wanted to find the barquentine I had come to seek. The little Japanese wife smiled, and told me that the *Constitution* was lying at the very end of the Long Wharf—for she had noticed her only the previous day, and had said to her husband that she had never before seen "such a

funny leetle ship. Looks very, very ol', and oh, so dirty—worsen dan any of de ol' timber ships."

"She must be a beauty," I said. "I was in hopes that I would find a nice little vessel."

Then I told Captain Dollond of my intention of taking a passage in the barquentine to the Marquesas Islands to begin life as a trader. He seemed very much interested, and then said:

"Now, don't do anything hastily as regards taking your passage in that rotten old crate. I want to have a yarn with you on the matter when you come back."

Promising him that I would do nothing in haste, I left him and his charming little fairy of a wife, and set out along the wharf, at the tail end of which I found the *Constitution*. She certainly was the most extraordinary-looking specimen of a craft I had ever seen. She was very, very long, with a low freeboard, and her thin spidery, and ill-stayed masts were stepped so widely apart that she presented a most grotesque appearance, for she was humped up amidships, and fell away towards bow and stern—she was, in fact, badly hogged and suggested the idea of an abnormally long dachshund, with a bad pain in its stomach, which made it drop its nose and tail, and elevate its spine in the centre.

I stepped on board and asked a dirty, ragged ruffian who was pacing the after-deck, smoking a green cigar, if the captain was on board.

"Guess he is, stranger. What the ——dew yew want with me?"

"Are you the captain?" I asked in astonishment, for a more disreputable-looking vagabond I had never seen.

"Guess I try tew be, young feller. What dew yew want?"

I told him that I thought of going to the Marquesas

Islands, and wanted to know what the passage money would be.

In an instant the man's manner changed, and he became oilily subservient—as the Down East Yankee always is when he sees the vision of dollars and cents in view. He asked me below into the dark, ill-smelling and filthy den he called a cabin, produced a bottle of Bourbon, and began to talk business. He offered to land me at Nukuhiva in the Marquesas for a hundred dollars.

“When do you sail,” I asked.

“Guess abaout Wednesday. Yew see, mister, I hev trouble in getting men. Jest now I and the mate are the only people on board—” Here he burst into a torrent of blasphemy about the crimping houses which demanded \$50 a head for every A.B. Then as soon as he had exhausted himself he “guessed” I would give him \$25 “jest ter clinch the passage agreement.” I “guessed not,” said I had not made up my mind, but would let him know on the morrow. He showed his yellow teeth at an attempt at a pleasant smile, and then we parted.

Just as I was crossing the gangway I met a man who I surmised was the mate, and bade him good-morning. He was a short, squarely-built young fellow, with a very dark complexion and jet-black hair, beard and moustache, very regular features, but with a stern, almost morose expression. I took him to be a Spanish-American. He gave me a polite good-morning and passed on.

Returning to the barque I found Captain Dollond awaiting me, and told him that I did not think I would sail in the *Constitution*, not liking either the vessel or her skipper.

“I am glad of that,” he said; “now this is what I have to say. I am bound to Sydney to load wool for

London. If you care to come with me and lend a hand to work the ship, I'll give you a free passage. Of course you will live aft, and I shall be glad if you will accept my offer. At Sydney you will find plenty of vessels running to the Islands."

I thanked him for his kind offer, and said that whilst I was very much tempted to accept it I had an aversion to returning to Sydney, and explained why. He pressed me to think the matter over. "Sleep on it, and then come and have breakfast with us to-morrow. To be quite frank, my offer of a free passage is not an unselfish one. I am very short-handed. Out of my crew of fourteen only six are left—the others were enticed away by these infernal crimps, and I cannot get any others unless I consent to be robbed of \$500. And even then I would most likely get as A.B.s five men who would be no good to me. If you come, I'll put you in my brother's watch, and you can bunk in his cabin. Now, think it over to-night."

Then we had dinner—the captain, his wife, and first and second officers and myself. It was a very pleasant meal, and I could see that the *Gazelle* was a "happy" ship, for there was evidently a close feeling of *camaraderie* existing between Dollond and his officers. The steward was a jolly little Japanese, and his wife, who was Mrs Dollond's maid, assisted him to serve the dinner.

The *Gazelle*, so Dollond told me, was his own ship, was only two years old, and already had made a name for herself by an extraordinarily quick run from Glasgow to Yokohama.

I remained with my new friends until past four o'clock. Never before had I met with so much kindness from people who, a few hours before, had been strangers.

I had not proceeded far along the wharf when I

heard footsteps behind me, and presently was overtaken by the mate of the schooner. He was carrying his bag, and was followed by a man with his sea chest. He stopped and asked me if I could recommend him decent lodgings.

"I have had a turn up with the old man," he said, "and have cleared out."

"You can get a room at my place in Howard Street," I said; "five dollars a week for a room is what I pay, and there is a good restaurant close to, where they feed you well for a dollar a day."

He thanked me, and then as we went on together he told me that the skipper of the schooner was an evil-tempered, mean old bully, and treated his crew in the most inhuman manner.

"About half-an-hour ago," he continued, "I heard cries on deck, and running up from below I found the skipper was 'booting' the old cook, who was lying senseless and bleeding outside the galley. He said that the cook had 'sassed' him—which I knew to be a lie. Then I noticed that he had a knuckle-duster on his hand, and that it was blood-stained. I felt pretty mad, and gave him a lift under the ear that sent him down with a dump. Then I took off his knuckle-duster, and hove it overboard, and left him to lie as he fell. After attending to the cook, I got all my gear together and cleared out."

"What a brute! I went to see him this morning about a passage, but his looks put me off. And the schooner looks like a broken-down hearse."

"She is an old coffin, and I am glad I'm clear of her. I shipped on her at Papeite four months ago. Before that I was second mate of the *Sea Breeze*, a New Bedford whaler, and one day my boat was stove in by a whale I was lancing, and I had two ribs broken. The skipper landed me at Papeite, and when I got

better and came out of the hospital I met old 'yellow teeth,' whose mate had left him, and I was fool enough to take his place."

As soon as we reached my lodgings I saw my landlady—a dear old soul—who at once gave my new acquaintance a room. Then he and I went to the restaurant for supper, and had a long talk with the result that we agreed to become mates and go to the South Seas together.

He told me his story and I told him mine. His father was an Englishman, his mother a Maori, and he was born at the island of Vella Lavella, in the Solomon Archipelago, where his father had a trading station. At fourteen years of age he went to sea in a sperm whaler, rose to be boat-steerer, then fourth, third and second mate, and taught himself navigation. Then after six years of whaling life he returned to Vella Lavella, and found that his father and mother had been murdered by the natives, and the trading station looted and burnt. In a quiet, simple way he related the tale of the bloody vengeance he wreaked upon his parents' murderers.

"I was well known to, and on very friendly terms with, the natives of Rubiana Island—the fiercest fighters and greatest head-hunters in all the Solomon Islands. I hired a cutter, sailed over to Rubiana, and made a bargain with fifty picked men. A week later, at dark, we anchored the cutter in a little uninhabited bay five miles from the village whose people had killed my father and mother. I knew my way through the bush, and just as daylight was breaking we fell upon the place. Not a single grown man escaped, for our attack was so sudden. We took as many women and children prisoners as the cutter could carry back to Rubiana, and let the others run away into the bush. Then we burnt the village and destroyed all the canoes.



"I knocked about the North West Pacific for a year or two after that, and then took to whaling again—and here I am with about \$360 in my pocket, and ready for anything."

We agreed to make our way to either the Marquesas, Tahiti or Samoa by the first chance that offered; then after spending an hour at the Bella Union Theatre we returned to our lodgings and turned in.

In the morning I went to breakfast on board the barque, and told Captain Dollond that I had decided not to accept his kind offer. He was disappointed, but he did not again try to make me change my mind. We walked up to town together and parted at the Merchant's Exchange, I promising to come and see him again before he sailed.

Returning to my lodgings, I found my new friend anxiously awaiting me.

"Look here," he cried excitedly, pointing to a short paragraph in the shipping news column of the *Daily Alta*, "this ought to suit us. Let us hurry off."

The paragraph was as follows:

"The Hawaiian schooner *Kahina*, Gosset, master, has come out of dock. She is chartered to take timber to Apia, Samoa, viâ Fanning Island."

We hurried down to the *Kahina*, and found "Gosset, master," on board, and in five minutes had come to an arrangement with him. He agreed to land us at Apia for \$50 each, and we paid him half the sum down. He was a cheery, little, red-faced tub of a man—an Englishman—and his vessel was a smart fore-and-after of 200 tons. Her crew were all Polynesians—Gosset and his two officers being the only white men on board.

We did not sail for nearly three weeks, and then we spun out of San Francisco Bay before a stiff breeze,

with every stitch of canvas we could set. The *Kahina* must have presented a fine appearance, for, as we passed between Alcatraz Island and the old Presidio, the crews of a number of ships lying at anchor mounted the bulwarks to look at us as we tore by, and several of them cheered—much to Gosset's delight, for he was intensely and properly proud of his craft, which he had had built under his own supervision.

I must mention that the *Gazelle* had sailed sixteen days previously. I had said farewell to Captain Dollond, his wife and brother, with sincere regret, for they had all been very kind to me; and, the day before the beautiful little barque sailed, my newly-found comrade and I had had supper with them, and then we all went to the theatre together.

"I am quite sure we shall see each other again," said Dollond to me as I bade him good-bye; "some day, when you have had enough of trading in the South Seas you will go to Sydney to spend your money, and I expect to make a good many voyages to Sydney during the next five years. Anyway I shall call and see your people there."

And so we parted—the little Japanese wife telling me, smilingly, that she, too, hoped to see me again.

For eight days we carried a strong north-easterly breeze, the little *Kahina* sailing like a witch. Then, after sighting the lofty cloud-capped mountains of Hawaii, we kept a direct S. course for Fanning Island—nearly a thousand miles distant, the strong breeze gradually failing us till at last it died away altogether, and for two days we were swept steadily to the E. by the strong equatorial counter current; then suddenly the glass began to fall, and an ominously long swell came rolling sullenly from the South, and the schooner rolled so heavily that nearly everyone on board began to feel seasick.

Gosset was a careful man, and made every preparation for a hard blow, and well it was that he did so, for by nine o'clock that night the vessel was hove to on the port tack fighting a savage hurricane, and a truly appalling sea, seething white under a sky of inky blackness. For eighteen hours the storm continued, the sprightly little *Kahina* behaving most bravely through it all. Only once did she ship a sea—just before daylight she took a heavy plunge, and ere she could recover herself a towering wall of water fell upon her amidships with a mighty crash and smothered her completely. She rose trembling and shook herself free, not a bit the worse except that about 20 feet of her bulwarks had gone, leaving only the tough green heart stanchions, which seemed to say: "We are all right and stood the racket, didn't we? As for your two-inch soft pine planking—bah! what can you expect of such poor stuff!"

During the following week we had but faint airs from the westward, and the easterly current running at two knots continued to set us away from Fanning Island and towards Christmas Island, a vast atoll then uninhabited, though sometimes visited by shark-catching schooners from Honolulu.

One Sunday afternoon, as the *Kahina* was gently and lazily pushing her sharp bows through the placid sea under a faint air which just gave her steerage way, we sighted the crowns of some coconut trees, apparently growing out of the ocean, and knew that it was Christmas Island. And almost at the same time, an Hawaiian sailor who was doing some work to the fore-rigging aloft called out that he could see something like a boat a long way off on the port quarter. There were, he said, a lot of sea-birds flocking about it.

"Lower away one of the boats, Mr Watson, and see

what it is," said Captain Gosset to the mate, as he brought his glasses to bear on the object—"it is certainly a boat, low down in the water."

Bill and I went with the mate, and after an hour's pull we drew near the derelict, which was surrounded by an enormous number of birds, and swimming round and round it were a score or more of large sharks, their hideous forms showing clearly through the still, glassy water. The boat was very low down in the water, and when we ran alongside and looked over the gunwale we saw a terrible sight. Five dead people lay huddled together in the bottom—four men and one woman—presenting a most dreadful appearance, for they had died of hunger and thirst, and the fierce rays of a torrid sun had turned their bodies black.

Suddenly Bill placed his hand on my arm, and pointed silently to the stern of the boat, where was painted the words "*Gazelle*, Glasgow."

It was impossible for us to stay near the boat more than a few minutes, but during that time I was able to recognise one of the poor creatures as Captain Dollond's brother, and the woman as Mrs Dollond's maid. There were evidences in the way of extra clothing, etc., that there had been at least ten people in the boat. No doubt those that were missing had jumped overboard in the agonies of thirst.

"We cannot leave them here," said the mate to me in a low voice, and he pointed to the prowling sharks, which were so close to both boats that the men were dealing them heavy blows with their oars; "we must tow the boat to the ship and scuttle her properly after we are rid of these brutes."

Taking the boat in tow we pulled back to the schooner, followed by those hateful sharks, several of which made savage rushes at the blade of the mate's steer oar. As soon as we got alongside the schooner,

Watson and the captain held a hurried consultation, and half-a-dozen Snider rifles and a whaler's bomb-gun were passed down to us. In ten minutes we had disposed of eight or nine of the most daring of the sharks, which, as they sank in the ensanguined water, were riven asunder by their fellows. Then, when all was quiet, we brought the derelict boat alongside, put in half a ton of iron ballast, and passed a lot of half-inch rope right round from stem to stern, to prevent the poor remnants of mortality from floating out, and then came on deck, where Gosset was awaiting us, prayer-book in hand.

In a husky voice the old man read the Service for the Burial of the Dead at Sea, and, as he concluded, raised his hand to Watson, who was standing in the open gangway just over the boat with the bomb-gun in his hand. A second more and the loud report of the gun rang out, and the bomb tore through the bottom timbers of the boat, which sank quickly just as the tip of the red sun vanished beneath the shining sea-rim astern of our silent ship.

\* \* \* \* \*

At dawn next morning I was aroused by Gosset.

"There is another boat in sight—less than a mile away, and no signs of life about her. Will you come with me?"

As the starboard quarter boat was lowered into the still calm sea the sun was rising, and showed us the long, long line of Christmas Island five miles distant, with scarcely any surf breaking upon the barrier reef, so motionless was the ocean.

Swiftly the whaleboat, manned by four of our Kanaka crew, sped over the glasslike surface of the water towards the silent boat, around which we saw an ominous swarm of sea-birds—some wheeling and circling in air, others resting upon the water, and many



perched upon the gunwales of the boat itself. And there, too, were the "gaff topsails" of several very large sharks moving slowly and noiselessly to and fro.

No one among us spoke as we came alongside and glanced shudderingly at the huddled-up and distorted forms of what had once been men. It was the captain's boat, and he, I recognised, lying for'ard. The body of his wife was not there; though that she had been in the boat was evident, for lying on the bottom boards was one of her slippers, a long tortoiseshell hair-ornament, and her watch and chain.

Taking the boat in tow we returned to the schooner, and then as a light breeze sprang up we stood away towards the boat entrance into the lagoon of Christmas Island, where we anchored. It had been our intention to bury the bodies on one of the two small sandy islets near the passage, but we found it impossible to do so. Searching about, we found a deep, quiet pool almost surrounded by coral boulders, and to this we took the derelict boat, half-filled her with coral slabs from the beach, and then scuttled her.

"I wonder what became of the barque?" I said to Gosset, as we were returning to the schooner.

He shook his head: "Turned turtle, I fear. She was too light, must have been caught by a sudden squall, and gone over."

\* \* \* \* \*

After calling at Fanning Island—one of the loneliest and yet most interesting of the low-lying atolls of the Pacific (is is now one of the connecting stations of the new Pacific cable), the *Kahina* turned her prow towards Samoa, and ere many days had passed we had run into the glorious and lusty south-east trade wind, and were galloping over the white-horse-tipped billows to our destination. The *Kahina* was certainly a "happy" ship, if there ever was one that sailed the



sunlit Pacific seas. Old Gosset was not only a grand specimen of the British sailor, but an even-tempered, well-educated man, who studied the comforts of his officers and crew as much as he did his own. Yet at times, when occasion demanded, he could be rough—very, but necessarily rough—and his right hand never knew what his left hand did, so quick was he with the latter, and the recipient of his attentions never wanted any more. Then, too, the old fellow had a good voice, and could sing—and recite as well—and I well remember one night, after we had arrived in Samoa, and half-a-dozen skippers—Americans, English and German, and a score of traders of all nationalities were gathered together in “Charley the Russian’s” saloon, how Gosset gave us “Gray’s Elegy,” and how quiet we became when he had finished.

“There is another stanza,” he said apologetically, “which isn’t included in the regular ‘Elegy,’ but which was left out by some sort of darned mistake. Would you like to hear it?”

“Give it to us, Gosset,” said Channing, the captain of a “blackbirder.”

“Well, here it is—as well as I can remember it,” and old Gosset half-closed his eyes as he extended his hand—a hand that swept away all our garish surroundings, and brought back to us sweet memories of home.

“There scatter’d oft (the earliest of the year)  
By hands unseen, are show’rs of vi’lets found;  
The redbreast loves to bill and warble there,  
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.”

\* \* \* \* \*

A fortnight after we reached Apia, Bill and I bade farewell to Gosset and his officers and crew, for the *Kahina* was returning to California with a cargo of

copra, and my comrade and I had decided to go to the island of Tutuila, where Bill had a friend who lived at Leone Bay. He was an American ex-whaling skipper, who had settled down as a trader in the South Seas twenty years previously, and had married a Rotumah Island girl of good family. My comrade had sailed as boat-steerer with his brother, who was a New Bedford whaling skipper. We thought that he would be just the man to give us good advice as to our starting as traders in Samoa, and we were not mistaken.

He received us in the most hospitable manner, and before twenty-four hours had passed my comrade and I had fallen violently in love with three of his charming half-caste daughters and their mother as well, for, although she was nearly forty years of age, she was one of the most beautiful and graceful Polynesian women that I had ever seen, and looked as young as her eldest daughter, who was nineteen. To this girl my comrade was particularly assiduous in his attentions, and, young as I was, I could foresee that our agreement to continue mates was in imminent peril of a quick severance.

And so it did happen, for one evening, as Luita and Sophie—the two younger girls—and I were returning to the house from pigeon shooting in the mountain forest, we caught sight of Maisie Hutton and Mr William Garde, of Vella Lavella, seated under a big *maso'i* tree, which stood on a spur of the mountains overlooking the quiet waters of Leone Bay. Maisie's head was pillowed on the broad bosom of Bill, and her right arm was clasped around his neck.

Sophie giggled, and said in Samoan as she pinched my arm: "Hush, do not speak, not let them see us. It is as my mother said, '*Le sui alli ma Maisie e loto le fa'aipoipoga*' (Maisie and the sailor are agreed to marry).

And after supper that night my friend Bill came to

me, and in a silly, halting and dreadfully roundabout way began to say something to the effect that our host had asked him to remain at Leone and assist him in the work of building a small schooner.

"So you see," he added lamely, "I think I had better take his offer, as I am to take charge of the schooner as soon as she is launched."

"Just so, Bill. And I suppose you'll have charge of Miss Maisie Hutton as well?"

"Er, er—yes. That is, I think so," and he rose hurriedly and left me to chase some fowls out of the garden.

The wedding took place a week later, and then I said good-bye to my kind friends and Bill, and took passage in a small schooner for Vavau in the Friendly Islands, where, I had heard, there was a good opening for a trader. But after a stay of two weeks I left the place in disgust. The natives were such a canting lot of snuffling hypocrites, and such abject imitators of the Methodist Chadbands, who practically ruled the Friendly Islands, that I foresaw I should soon be in hot water if I settled there as a trader. As it was I got into trouble.

One Sunday morning I went out along the cliffs for a walk, and returned to the village (Niafu) just as the people were coming out of church. In the morning two burly native policemen came to the house where I was staying, arrested me, and marched me off to the court-house, where I was charged with "breaking the Sabbath" and fined five dollars. I protested very strenuously, but was advised by a friendly white trader to take it quietly, or I should only have my fine increased, and perhaps be imprisoned as well.

"It is the white missionary's doing," he added, "the miserable little beast spoke of your 'bad conduct' at the afternoon service, and said that the *matabuli*

(councillors) should make an example of any godless Sabbath-breakers."

I paid my fine in silence, wishing that I "could utter the thoughts that arose in me." However, I bided my time.

On the morning that the schooner was to sail for Fiji I called on the reverend gentleman in his own house, and expressed my opinion of his action in very vigorous language. I am sure it did him good—it certainly did me.

From Vavua we sailed direct to Levuka in Fiji, where I remained nearly a year. Then Samoa—for which I have always cherished an affection—lured me away from the frizzy-haired Fijians, and I found myself back in Apia.

My first thought was of Bill Garde, and after I had taken a room at Joe D'Acosta's hotel I began a long letter to him. Whilst I was writing it an American storekeeper named Parker came in to see me. I told him to whom I was writing.

"Then you haven't heard about the poor fellow?" he said. "Six months ago the schooner sailed on her first voyage to Sydney. Your friend Garde was in command, and had his young wife with him. They have never been heard of since. I thought when I first saw that schooner that she was overmasted."

## IV

### THE UNKNOWN SHIP OF MADURO LAGOON

THE great atoll of Māduro is one of the Marshall Island Archipelago in the North Pacific, and consists of a number of low-lying, narrow islets, densely clothed with coco-palms, and connected with each other by the coral reef which encompasses the noble lagoon. At the present time it is German territory, and its Malayo-Polynesian native inhabitants are under the "fatherly" care of a few of the Kaiser's officials, who rule them with a rod of iron, and make them long for the days of a few years ago, when the new expelled English and American traders dwelt among them in happiness and peace.

On the eastern side of the atoll there is a broad ship passage into the lagoon, and near this entrance is a wondrously beautiful and well-wooded island called Karolin, about three miles in length and one in width. In the native language Karolin means "Peaceful Sleep," and it is indeed a place where one can sleep peacefully, lulled by the murmur of the surf on the outer reef, and the soft rustle of the palm fronds as they sway gently to the almost sleeping trade wind at night.

I know the island well, and love it, for it has many happy memories for me.

When I first visited Karolin—I was then engaged in trading on the main island of Māduro—I was surprised to find that although the island was so fertile it was uninhabited, although it contained everything to

make it attractive to the native mind—many thousands of coco-palms, all richly fruited, groves of pandanus and jack-fruit trees, and acres of ground covered with splendid arrowroot plants. Yet in former years it had been densely populated, as was shown by the traces of what had once been extensive plantations of bananas, and of vegetable named *puraka*, stone-lined wells, and the coral foundations of hundreds of houses, now overgrown with creepers, vines and jungle.

At that time I was unable to speak the Marshall Islands language, and could not, therefore, learn from the natives the reason of their desertion of such a beautiful spot: and, indeed, to all my inquiries I had but mystifying answers. One was that Jibberick (the king of Māduro) did not wish any of his people to live there, as they might be surprised by a war party from the neighbouring atoll of Ahrnu and cut off; another was that the island was unhealthy (a pure fiction), and a third that all the fish about the reef of Karolin were highly poisonous—this was certainly true. A fourth reason was that the king liked to have all his subjects settled near him on his own islet of Egit, and a fifth that Lailik, the chief of the town in which I lived, and the king's successor in the event of his death, had quarrelled over the ownership of the island, and had agreed to leave it uninhabited, though twice every year they sent a fleet of canoes there, manned by some hundreds of natives. They stripped the coco-trees of their nuts, divided the produce between them, turned it into oil, and sold it to the white traders. This latter story I believed to be the true one.

Lailik and I were good friends. It had so happened that two years before I came to Māduro I had rendered him a good service. He was voyaging from Māduro to Milli Lagoon in his great double canoe with seventy people, when they were first overtaken by a hurricane,



which nearly wrecked them. Then followed a calm of thirteen days, during which many of their number perished from hunger and thirst. The vessel in which I was supercargo met them two hundred miles out of their course, and I gave the survivors water and provisions, and many months afterwards Lailik and his people returned safely to Māduro.

A few days after I had settled on Māduro as a trader and had been warmly received by Lailik, another event occurred which made him more grateful. His second wife (he had three), a young and graceful woman named Nadup, had a severe attack of ophthalmia, which I was able to cure by a simple solution of nitrate of silver.

With the old king Jibberick I was not *persona grata*, having offended him by selling some arms to his hereditary enemies of Ahrnu. It was no use my explaining to him that my employers' interests had to be considered, and that my instructions were to sell arms to anyone who could pay for them, and also that he himself had bought rifles and ammunition from both my predecessors and myself. The old man sulked, and one day when I sent him a present of a small keg of salt beef he returned it to me—subjecting me to about the greatest insult he could devise, for to decline a gift of food is regarded as a serious matter by all Malayo-Polynesians.

One day, shortly after Lailik's wife's eyes were better, I asked him to tell me the real reason why no one lived on Karolin. He hesitated a few moments, and then told me that the island "was full of ghosts"—haunted, and that for many years it had been impossible for anyone to sleep there at night, and that even in the day-time these ghosts had appeared, walking about in the jungle or sitting on the beach on the inner or lee side of the island.

"Have you seen any of these ghosts, Lailik?" I asked.

"Yes," was the emphatic reply, "twice have I seen one of them when I was a boy. Once it was at sunset, and I saw the ghost come out from behind a big *gur* (banian tree) and walk towards the beach. The second time I saw the same man swimming close to the shore. I knew him by his red beard."

"A red beard!"

"Aye, even so—a red beard, for it was the ghost of a white man," was the quiet response.

I looked at Lailik steadily, and his eyes met mine unwaveringly. He was a strikingly handsome man of about forty years of age, with a jet-black beard.

"You doubt me," he said, "and it gives me no surprise. Yet to no other white man would I speak as I now speak to you, for you will not laugh, nor tell me that I am lying. But it is true. There are many ghosts on Karolin—ghosts of white men who died there before I was born. Many people have seen them. Many have seen the man with the red beard, who carries a cutlass in his hand, and many have seen the ghost of a *Shina*\*—a man with a long tail of hair hanging down his back, and his garments red with blood, for his throat is cut, and with one hand he seeks to stay the blood. And there are other ghosts of white men. But it is hard for me to speak of these things."

"Lailik, you can trust me. What you tell me no one shall know. It will be hidden in my heart. I shall speak of it to no one."

Again he hesitated, but after some more pressing he told me the whole story of a tragedy that had been enacted on Karolin during his father's lifetime, and when there were no Europeans resident on Māduro.

\* Chinaman.

I listened to him intently. That he believed that he had actually seen a ghost there was no doubt, and equally there was no doubt in the imaginative minds of many others of his people that they too had seen the disembodied spirits of a number of white men, who had all met with a violent death in the space of a week or so. The aversion of all the natives to speak of the tragedy to any white man was easily explainable, for they feared that they would be regarded as murderers, and their villages destroyed and burnt, and themselves killed by an English or American ship of war. In those days the people of some of the Marshall Islands had earned for themselves an evil reputation for the cutting off of whaleships and trading vessels, and the massacre of their crews, and when they were punished for their misdoings it sometimes happened that absolutely innocent communities were shot down with the guilty. Naturally, therefore, the people of Māduro kept the story of what had happened on Karolin to themselves, and, indeed, destroyed all traces that would lead to its ever coming to light.

As nearly as possible I will repeat Lailik's own words. He told me the story when he and I were alone, fishing in the lagoon. We paddled out from my own station directly across the atoll for a distance of eight or nine miles till we were within rifle-shot of the white beach of Karolin with its fringe of lofty coco-palms.

After we had lowered our mat sail, and anchored and eaten Lailik pointed out to me the dark green tops of a grove of jack-fruit trees near the centre of the island, and asked me if I knew the place.

"Yes," I replied, "I have twice shot pigeons there. There are a lot of very high trees growing out of the banks which surround an old *puraka* plantation."

He nodded. "Aye, and in between the butts of the

trees, deep down in the ground, lie some of the white men—others went into the bellies of the sharks. No one of us will take bread-fruit from those trees now, even if there was a famine in the land. Didst ever hear of Lol, son of the brother of Jibberick? ”

I shook my head.

“ Lol was a very strong and daring young man. He feared nothing, and jested always at sacred things and the gods. One day there came to Māduro a great canoe from Milli Lagoon with a hundred people in it. They came as friends to stay two months. Among them was a young woman named Le-juan, and she and Lol became lovers, and there was talk of marriage, and preparations were made. Now, by reason of the continual feasting that had happened for many weeks, all the ripe jack-fruit had been eaten, and there were none left but those that were ripe and falling from the grove on Karolin, which no one dared to gather. Le-juan, who was incensed, said that to be without jack-fruit at her wedding feast was an insult. She did not know why no one dared to pluck the fruit from those trees. Then Lol told her and she called him a coward.

“ That night he came to me and said : ‘ To-morrow I go to Karolin to get jack-fruit for my wedding feast. I fear nothing.’

“ So he took a canoe and went alone after sunrise. We could not stay him, for he jeered at us, and when he did not jeer he cursed, and Le-juan stood near and laughed, and gave him words of encouragement. He hoisted his mat sail, and set off, beating against the wind, and long before the sun was in mid-sky he landed on the beach, just there before us.

“ The night came, and he did not return. In the morning seven young men, of whom I was one, went to seek him. We found his canoe on the beach, and

a little higher up on the bank was Lol. He was lying on his back, dead. His hands were clenched and his eyes wide open, and his face was bad to look upon, though in life he had been a handsome man.

"Although he was so godless, he had many friends, and because of his death we took the girl Le-juan and strangled her—for she had caused it. Her own people were not angry because we did this. They knew it was right and proper, for why should a silly girl bewitch and destroy a strong man? And she died with but little pain and much honour; for those who strangled her were chiefs' wives, and it was done as she slept."

"Perhaps it was as well, Lailik. Such women as was Le-juan bring much trouble upon men by their beauty. Now tell me why the ghosts haunt Karolin."

\* \* \* \* \*

"This thing happened when there were many hundreds of people living on Karolin, in one large village under my father, who also ruled at Molok" (the large town in which my trading station was situated, and which was ruled by Lailik)—"how many hundreds I do not know—perhaps ten.

"One morning, when the rain came down very heavily and the wind was strong, a ship swept in through the passage. She was *kátoa* (full-rigged) with yards on all three masts. When she was well into the lagoon, and in smooth water, she came to the wind, and waited as if expecting a pilot. So my father and his brother, who could both speak English, went off in a canoe, and the captain made them very welcome, and asked them to take his ship to an anchorage. This they well knew how to do, for my uncle had been to sea in an American whaleship for many years, and was a good sailorman.

“When the ship was safely anchored, close to the beach of the little bay on the north end of the island, the captain was very pleased, and my father and his brother were taken into the cabin and given grog to drink, and presents of a musket with fifty bullets, and a can of fine, black powder.

“He told them that the ship came from Sydney, and was going to Manila with a rich cargo, and he had put into Māduro to fill the water-casks, and also to repair the bowsprit, which had been injured in a storm and was loose. He had been told of Māduro by another ship captain, who said that the passage into the lagoon was safe, and the people could be trusted not to try and take the ship.

“In the cabin, lying on a soft couch in the stern, was the captain’s wife, and seated by her were her two daughters; the captain told my father that his wife was ill, and that he was glad that his ship would be in smooth water for six or eight days so that the sick woman could be rested.

“In a little while the boats were lowered to get water from the four wells, which were in the village. They are but small wells, as you know, and the sailors grumbled at the water, which was just a little brackish, and the captain told my father that his men were a lazy and worthless lot, and that when he got to Manila he would send them all to prison, for they were continuously rude to him and his officers, often refused to work, and had threatened him with violence. The man who was most mutinous of all he pointed out—he was very tall and strong, and had a great red beard which hid his chest from view.

“Towards the evening the captain asked our people if they would lend him a house wherein his wife and daughters and he might sleep at night, for the cabin of the ship was very hot, even with the great stern



ports open, and the sick woman longed to rest on the land.

“My father and our people were pleased, especially the women, who clapped their hands with delight, for but very few of them had ever before seen a white woman, and in a little while the whole village was in commotion, the women and children running to get fine mats to lay upon the floor of the house my father had pointed out to the captain. It stood just above the margin of the beach, under the shade of two great bread-fruit trees, and, the ground being high, the wind blew about it more than any other house and made it cool. At the back was a grove of plantains, and in front was a wide open space covered with fine pebbles, which was always kept clean and free from dead leaves.

“Before sunset the three white ladies came on shore, and the two girls laughed at the manner in which our young women surrounded them as they stepped out of the boat. Many of them touched their hands, their hair, their feet, and kissed their clothes, for they had never before seen such a beautiful sight as these two white English girls, who were tall and straight and so like each other that only their father and mother could have discerned between them; and the captain, who laughed continuously at the way in which his daughters were worshipped, told my father they were *masaga* (twins). One was named Marie, and the other Toarisi (Doris?), and in a little while they let some of our young girls put their arms round their waists, and so all together they came to the house, the sick woman being carried on a litter by four sailors. Everything that we could offer in the way of food was taken to them, until at last the captain prayed us to send no more; and then, because he was grateful, he brought on shore a whole unopened case of twist

tobacco, and gave it to my father to be divided among the people.

“For two days and nights the captain—who was an old man—never left the house, except to go outside and smoke, for his wife did not get better, but lay and moaned, and sometimes laughed and sang, and the two girls, Marie and Toarisi, wept silently as they sat beside her, for her sickness was so great that she did not know them.

“On the morning of the third day the captain came to my father, and said, ‘I pray you that no noise be made near the house, for my wife sleeps, and the fever that has run so long in her veins abates.’

“Soon after the ship’s bell had struck eight times, the second mate came on shore and begged the captain to come quickly to the ship, for the man with the red beard and five other sailors had taken a keg of rum from the cabin in the night, and had become drunk, and beaten the Chinese steward, and struck down the mate and third mate with belaying pins, so that they were then as dead men.

“As the second mate spoke in whispered tones to his captain, the sick woman awakened and stretched out her hands, and cried out loudly, ‘Dick, Marie, Toarisi, come quickly, quickly, for I am leaving thee.’

“And as her hands fell, and they gathered about her, she died.

“The captain and the second mate stayed a little while with the dead lady, and then left her with the two girls. Then they went on board with ten strong young men of the village, and bound and put in irons all the crew, who were dulled with liquor, and attended to the first and third mates and the Chinese steward. Then the captain told the boatswain that he must take care of the ship until the morning, as the two officers were too badly hurt to stand, and that he (the captain)

was leaving five or six of our young men to help him watch the men in irons, and see that they did not break their fetters and do further mischief.

“Then he loaded the wounded officers’ pistols—they each had two—and placed them beside their pillows, and told them to shoot dead any one of the sailors who might force his way into the cabin. After this was done he took ten rifles from where they stood around the mizzen mast in the cabin, and put them into the boat, together with plenty of powder and ball; the rest of the rifles, and all the cutlasses, he carried into the mates’ cabins. Then he returned to the shore with the ship’s carpenter, who was a man of Shina like the steward. The carpenter brought with him planks and tools, and by noon he had made a coffin for the dead woman, and our people dug a grave under a grove of *kul* (pandanus-palms) and lined it strongly with smooth slabs of coral stones. Then at sunset four of our young men lifted the coffin, and the captain and his two daughters and the carpenter followed, and after them came all the people in the village, walking very slowly and sadly, for they were grieved to see how the girls wept.

“The old man read from the book, and then when he had finished he motioned to some young women to lead his daughters away, back to their house, and then when the grave was filled in he followed them, and all three sat there together in the darkness for many hours. Then the lamp was lit, and they slept.

“Just as dawn broke the people in the village were awakened by the sound of shots on the ship, and then by wild cries, and running to the beach, together with the captain and his daughters, they saw two of the five men who had been left on board to guard the officers swimming to the shore, and as they swam they were fired at by the sailors; the ship was so close to the

beach that they soon reached it, and then, unhurt, ran up the slope crying for my father.

“‘The white men have broken their bonds,’ they cried, ‘and have killed the two officers, the boatswain, the man of Shina, and our three comrades, with axes.’

“As they spoke the mutineers ceased firing with their muskets, and gathered together on the after deck, and began to drag about and load four brass cannons that were there—two on each side. That ship had eight cannons, four on the lower and four on the upper deck.

“‘Tell all your people to run to the right and left away from the houses,’ cried the captain to my father and his brother, and then he and his daughters and the Shina carpenter (who had slept on shore) sped to their house, which was very exposed, and quickly gathered together the guns and bullets and powder that were there, and began to run with them to where there was a high bank covered with *kul* trees. Just as they neared the top and were descending to safety on the other side, one of the cannons on the ship was fired and hundreds of round iron bullets swept around them, and the captain and carpenter both fell. Before any of our terrified people could go to their help the girls had carried their father behind the ridge, then they went back for the carpenter, and then again for the guns and ammunition. They were brave girls, and they gave our people courage.

“‘My father’s leg is wounded with a bullet,’ cried Toarisi to my father, ‘is there anyone among you who can help me stay the blood?’

“But the old man bade her have no fear, as the wound was not a bad one, and then, as it was being bound up, he directed my father what to do and how to beat off the mutineers should they try to land. As he was speaking three more cannons were fired into

the village, and the bullets and square bits of iron tore through the sides of the houses and made a great noise like the breaking of trees in a high wind. But no one was hurt, for all had fled from the houses as they had been told.

“‘From here we can shoot them down with my rifles,’ cried the captain to the chiefs, ‘bring quickly some coconut logs and lay them on the top of the bank so that we can lie behind in safety. Have no fear; trust to me. My daughters can shoot well. But let no one show himself, but keep behind the bank. How many of you have muskets, and know how to use them?’”

“Our people had but four, and they were so old and foul that the captain said they were better without them. The rifles which he had brought on shore were of a kind none of us had before seen. They each had four chambers, which went round like those of a revolver, and they fired long, heavy bullets.

“As quickly as possible we raised a heavy barricade of coconut logs on the top of the bank, and whilst this was being done no more cannons were fired from the ship, for the mutineers had gone below to the cabin, and none of them could be seen. But the captain told us he was sure that they knew what was being done.

“‘They have gone below to get grog to drink,’ he said, ‘and it is in my mind that presently they will load the eight cannons with round shot and fire them at us. But no one of us can be hurt if ye all obey me. And I will take a bloody revenge upon these cruel murderers,’ and his eyes, which were blue, and under heavy white brows, flashed with rage.

“All this time the two girls were sitting beside the carpenter, who was dying, for many bullets from the first cannon had entered his back and gone into his

bowels, and as the girls put water to his mouth the captain's dog—a great, fierce animal—came over to the dying man and sought to lick away the blood from his wounds.

“Presently the murderers came up on deck again, dragging with them the bodies of those they had slain, shouting out curses to the captain, and telling him they would soon have his daughters to entertain them. They threw all the bodies overboard save that of the Shina steward—who was a man they hated. This they took, and, although the man's throat was cut, they put a rope round his neck, and with much singing and jeering hoisted it to the end of the main yard of the ship, so that it could be well seen from the shore.

“Then the man with the red beard hung a board over the side, with writing upon it in large letters, and the two girls, as they saw it, covered their faces with their hands and wept, for the words were foul and shameful to them, and their father set his teeth and cursed, yet although his hands gripped his rifle he would not fire.

“‘If I kill but one of them now, as I could easily do,’ he said to my father, ‘the others may slip the cable and let the ship drift before the wind far out into the lagoon, and then make sail and escape, and I should lose not only my revenge, but my ship as well. And they have too many arms for us to try and re-take the ship just now. Let us watch and wait.’

“The captain was right, as you shall see presently.

“After they had thrown the bodies of the murdered men overboard to the sharks, they loaded all the eight cannons and began firing with round balls at the houses in the village and the great canoes on the beach. The canoes they soon destroyed, and some of the people wept with rage when twenty or thirty great cannon balls destroyed ten ocean-going canoes that each



carried a hundred and fifty people, and had each taken two whole years to build. As for the cannon shot that passed through the houses, we did not mind, for they hurt no one, and houses are easy to build. But when the shot crashed into, and utterly destroyed, the great canoes, it was as if they went through our hearts, for what is an island people like us without a fleet to fight in time of war, and to voyage to other lands in time of peace?

"After the mutineers had destroyed the canoes, they turned the cannons on the barricade we had made, and fired many shots, all of which struck the logs and made a great noise, but did no harm. Then they seemed to tire of further firing, for they could see no sign of life anywhere about the village, and gathered together on the after deck, and ate and drank, and presently two of them went aloft and scanned the shore closely, trying to discover what had become of our people and the captain and his party. When they descended to the deck again they joined the others, and they talked together, and then all of them but Red Beard left the poop—some going forward to the windlass, and some aloft to cast loose the sails.

"‘Shoot those who are aloft,’ cried the captain to his daughters, as, dragging himself to the barricade, he rested his rifle on the topmost log and fired at four of the men who were in one of the yards; but his aim was not good, and although he fired four times quickly no one of the sailors was hit.

"The girls Toarisi and Marie knelt beside him, and each fired, and two of the men fell from the yard upon the deck, and all the people of the village shouted. And again they fired, and a third man for a moment stood erect on the foot-rope, and then swayed and fell backward; the fourth ran down the rigging and hid under the bulwarks.

“ ‘Quick, girls, quick!’ shouted the captain, ‘get these people to help thee up into the branches of that tree, and shoot at those who are forward. Haste, haste, lest they slip the cable and the ship drifts out into the lagoon, for the breeze strengthens.’

“The tree of which he spoke still stands—it is a lofty jack-fruit—and the two girls, who were as strong and active as men, scarce needed any help to clamber up into the thick branches, where at a height of six fathoms from the ground they had a clear view of the ship’s decks, and in a little while they began to fire at the men who were gathered about the windlass, seeking to unshackle the chain cable. Two of them fell and lay still upon the deck, and the others fled and ran below to the cabin, the girls firing at them as they ran. Red Beard was the last to descend, and presently he came up again with a musket, and, taking shelter in the companion, pointed his gun at the thickly-leaved tree. But ere he could pull the trigger one of the girls fired, and he fell headlong down the steps. It was thought he was killed, but afterwards it was found that the girl’s bullet had struck him on the top of the shoulder and passed through without breaking any bones.

“Till long past noon the two girls, together with those of our men who had muskets, remained in the tree, and whenever one of the mutineers showed his head out of the cabin they all fired together. And as they sat and watched, my father and his head men and the captain held council as to what should be done, for the old man feared greatly that when darkness came on the mutineers would slip the cable and so escape. And then he offered a rich reward to my father if he would lead thirty of his men, and capture the ship as soon as it became dark. My father shook his head.

“ ‘It cannot be done. We have now no canoes, and

to swim off would mean to meet death half-way. See,' and he pointed to the fins of many sharks that swam to and fro, 'the sharks have already eaten the bodies of those cast overboard, and look for more. See how they gather beneath the body of the dead man who hangs from the main yard. It is because that they note and smell the few drops of blood that must still be falling upon the water. And even if we had canoes, what could our men, who have no guns, do against even but a few men on the ship, who have small guns in plenty and eight big cannons as well?'

"As the sun began to lower the old man's spirits were greatly vexed, for he feared to lose his ship in the night; and heedless of danger, and wounded as he was, he crawled to the top of the barricade of logs, and sat and gazed at the ship which lay very silent and quiet on the water. Presently one of his daughters came down from the tree and sat beside him, and they talked earnestly together. Then, at their bidding, the other girl, Marie, came down, and all three carefully drew the charges from their pistols, and from that of the dead carpenter, and reloaded them again, and made other preparations in silence. My father asked the captain what it was that lay in his mind.

" 'This!' he replied; 'I have lost my wife, and it is better for me and my daughters that we should all die together if I am to lose my ship as well, for then would we be cast out upon the world in poverty. Now, I pray you, get your young men to build me a raft strong enough to carry us to the ship when it is dark.'

" 'What would you do?' asked my uncle Ru.

" 'What business is that of thine!' cried the old man fiercely, 'thou and thy people are too cowardly to help me and two girls to take my ship from half-a-score of drunken men, so we shall try to do it our-

selves. Build me the raft—and thou shalt be well paid.’

“Then, to the shame of the young men, a girl named Najin rose and said, ‘I cannot fight, but I and my sister will go with the white girls and paddle the raft.’

“A silence fell upon the people, and then, for very shame’s sake, four young men stood up, and, without a word, began to tie up their long hair on the tops of their heads, as is the custom when we go to fight.

“‘Give us swords,’ they said to the captain; ‘we, too, will go with thee. But our spears are of no use, and we cannot fire guns.’

“‘Good,’ cried the old man, ‘thou art brave fellows, and I shall do well with thee,’ and his daughters brought four sharp cutlasses and placed them in the hands of the young men, who were now pleased and proud, for each of the girls kissed them on the cheek.

“Planks of bread-fruit trees were quickly got together, and carried to a place half-a-league away from the village, where they were lashed together and made into a raft, in readiness to launch when it was dark, for it was the captain’s design to paddle it far out into the lagoon and then turn and board the ship from the side from which the mutineers would look not for danger. When the men, carrying the planks for the raft, had gone, the captain opened six bottles of grog and gave some each to all that cared to drink, and then, through my father, told the four young men who were coming with him on the raft what to do when the ship was reached.

“‘Follow my daughters,’ he said; ‘it is in my mind that thou wilt find all the sailors in slumber or off their guard. But, if it is not so, and they are awake, they will be sober enough to make a strong fight. If they yield, bind them with the strips of green bark thou art taking with us on the raft; bind them so tightly that

they cannot free themselves; if they do not yield, kill them. The swords I have given thee are sharp, very sharp. But, although I cannot walk strongly, ye must, first of all, put me on the deck, so that I can see what is being done.'

"A little before sunset, as we watched, the mutineers suddenly came on deck from the cabin, and with loud cries and curses began firing their muskets at the village and the barricade.

" 'Let them fire,' said the captain to my father; 'the more they fire now the better it will be for us to-night.'

"Then the mutineers, some of whom were staggering about the decks, half-drunk, began to load the cannons again under the direction of Red Beard, and although the two white girls could have easily shot at and killed them, their father stayed their hands, for he desired no more blood to be shed—even that of the bad man, Red Beard. But Toarisi said some words to her father, whose face was white with pain of his wound, and he said, 'As you will, Toarisi. I must save our good ship which is our home and all to us.'

"As darkness came on rain clouds gathered to windward, and this pleased us greatly, for the rain would hide the raft from the vision of the mutineers. And then, as the first rain squall came roaring and hissing over the sea and tore through the trees on the land, the two girls, their father, the girl Najin and her sister, and the four young men, set off through the palm groves to where the raft lay, the old man being carried in a litter of boughs. It was still raining when they came to the raft, and quickly in the darkness it was launched, and the nine people left the shore.

"When they had paddled a little while the old captain changed his plans, and made direct for the ship, for the rain squalls were so fierce that he was afraid that they might drive the raft so far into the

lagoon that they would be unable to paddle against them and approach the ship from the other side.

"Very carefully they paddled straight to the ship, peering through the blinding, driving rain, and presently they discerned her. She had swung round to her anchor and was lying head on to the shore, and the raft came under her bows very gently and was made fast to the guys that run from the dolphin-striker, as you call it, to the sides of the bows. For a while they all listened, but heard no sound from the decks. Then the white girl Marie, and Najin, and two of our young men, very gently clambered up and looked over the ship's head down upon the main deck, which was running with water, pouring out through the scuppers. No one was to be seen, but from the companion there was a dull shaft of light, blurred by the rain, coming from the cabin, and presently they heard the voice of a man singing.

"The girl Marie leant over the bows and called softly to her father, who was then helped up on deck, and quickly taken to the companion door. He had a pistol in one hand and his own sword in the other—not a cutlass, such as common sailors use, but a long, thin knife in a fine, black leather sheath, with a hilt like that of the swords of the man-of-war officers who now come to Māduro—covered with wire of gold.

"‘I keep guard here,’ he said to his daughters in a whisper; ‘no one of those men shall pass me.’

"Then the man who had been singing when the raft came to the ship ceased, and there was clapping of hands and clinking of glasses heard, and Toarisi crept to one of the open flaps, and, kneeling, peered down, with a pistol in her right hand. Then, with her left hand, she motioned to those beside her to keep away, and be silent, for the man with the red beard was speaking.



“ ‘Let us cease this foolery,’ he said, ‘and see to the ship. My wound burns like fire, and we must not delay. So let us drink once more, and then to work and slip the cable, so that we can get away from here. Sorry am I to lose the two girls, but it cannot be helped. Six of you presently go aloft and loose the fore topsail, then come down and hoist and sheet home, together with some of the head sails, so that, when the cable is slipped, the ship cants to the north. The lagoon is wide and clear of danger, so when we are well out I shall heave to until daylight, so that we can beat through the passage. To-morrow is time enough for us to count and divide the money in the iron box.’

“The girl Toarisi whispered all this to her father, who told her what to do, and she and her sister crept up to the skylight, and just as Red Beard rose from his seat, glass in hand, and cried out ‘Good luck to us!’ Toarisi fired, and the bullet entered his stomach, and Marie shot another man, who was young and handsome, through the chest, and then again they fired—for their pistols had two barrels—and two other men fell, either dead or wounded.

“In an instant wild cries and groans arose, and the mutineers who were not hurt seized some loaded pistols which lay on the cabin table and fired wildly up through the skylight, but their bullets hit no one, and as they ran hither and thither around the cabin the captain gave Marie his pistol, and she, fearless of danger and mad with rage, ran down the companion steps and shot dead a man who was rushing up cutlass in hand.

“The cabin was well lit, and the girl Najin saw all that was happening, and she afterwards told my father that when the man whom the girl Marie had shot fell back dead upon the cabin floor the captain called out

and asked the others if they would yield. They hesitated, and again the girls fired, and then the men ran, some into the side cabins and closed the doors, and others down into the lazarette by the hatch under the cabin table.

"The four young men followed them, and the captain, first reloading the pistols, told them to break open the doors with axes.

" 'Kill them all,' he said.

"It was soon done. One by one they were dragged out and killed, either by pistol-shot or cutlass-thrust. Then the lazarette hatch was put on and secured.

" 'As for those three fellows down there, they can do no harm,' said the captain, 'we have them like rats in a trap.' Then he turned to Red Beard, who was sitting on the floor, groaning with pain.

" 'Thou dog,' cried the old man fiercely, 'dost still breathe!' and he thrust his sword twice into the man's heart.

"Then he bade Marie light and hoist a lantern on the fore stay to let the people on shore know that all was well. The girl Najin went with her to help, and all the others stayed in the cabin, and the captain then gave the girl Toarisi some wine, and he and the others drank grog, for all were very wet, as well as weary. Presently the captain bade the young men carry the dead men up on deck and cast them overboard. The sight of so much blood terrified Najin's sister, who ran out of the cabin and went forward to be with her sister and the white girl, who were getting ready the light. This was how her life was saved.

"After that no one knew what happened in the cabin.

"But the girl said that just as she reached the fore part of the ship, and was speaking to her sister, she thought she heard the sound of a shot from the cabin,

and then in an instant the ship trembled, and with a sound of thunder a mighty pillar of flame leapt up from the stern, and all the after deck was thrown high in air, and the blast of the wind that it caused blew the three girls from off the upper fore deck into the water, half stunned and bruised, and when they reached the beach they were all but exhausted, and had to be lifted up and carried to the bank.

"As the people on shore ran hither and thither in great alarm, not knowing what to do, flames burst out all about the after part of the ship, and burnt with great fierceness, spreading everywhere, although it still rained a little, and the vessel still rode head to wind. In an hour she was ablaze from one end to the other, and then all the rigging and sails caught, and the lagoon became as light as if it were broad daylight. All this time the body of the man whose throat was cut was still hanging from the yard arm, but the flames crept along and caught the block through which the rope was passed, and the dead man fell into the water and sank. Before this two of the eight guns which had been loaded went off, and three of our people who were gathered on the beach were killed by iron bullets, and many wounded. Some cried out that the guns had been fired purposely, but the white girl Marie, who was weeping as she watched the ship burn, said that everyone on board was killed, and that the cannons went off because of the fire which encompassed them. And this indeed was true, for had there been any one man alive and moving about the decks he would have been seen from the shore, because of the great light. And Marie told us that in the lazarette were more than a score of barrels of powder, and many kegs of leaden bullets, and it was her thought that the mutineers who had fled there had perhaps broken a barrel of powder to load their pistols,

and that her father, hearing the noise, had lifted the hatch and shot down to terrify them.

"All through the night the ship continued to burn, and towards dawn, after the fore and main masts had fallen, red pillars of fire, into the water, there was another, but much smaller, explosion in the hold amidships. It rent the sides of the ship asunder, and she sank quickly. And in the morning naught was to be seen but bits of charred timber, and some of the uncharred portions of the after part of the ship, which had been blown in the air at the first. But there were still many sharks.

"For two months the girl Marie lived with us, always very quiet and sad. Then, to our great sorrow, she sickened and died, and was buried with her mother."

\* \* \* \* \*

Here Lailik's story ended. I asked him many questions, and gathered from his replies that the ship must have been a vessel of about 800 or 1000 tons. She had painted ports, and carried studding sails. One thing that had impressed the natives was the beautiful decorations of the main cabin. Between each state-room, he said, the sides were lined with mirrors, "a fathom high and half-a-fathom wide—very beautiful and set in squares of gold" (gilded frames). Then in the captain's own state-room were many pictures of ships, painted by the girls Doris and Marie. Another thing that the natives well remembered was that, besides the captain's dog, the boatswain had a very savage bull dog—an animal of a breed they had never before seen—and that the creature howled very much when the captain, his wife and daughters, came on shore, for he was much attached to the girls.

## CAPTAIN KELLY OF THE "MILLY"

ONE day, towards sunset, in March 1889—a week previous to the great *Calliope* hurricane at Apia, which destroyed the German and American squadrons, I was becalmed off Sophia Island, an uninhabited spot a few hundred miles north-west of Samoa. It is a very small island, less than three miles in circumference, well-wooded, of an extremely picturesque appearance, and is the southern outlier of that group of low-lying coral atolls known as the Ellice Group. More than a hundred years ago it was inhabited by some two or three hundred of light-skinned Polynesians speaking a language akin to Samoan, but for some unknown reason they left their native land and went to the neighbouring atoll of Nukulaelae and never returned to it. The place is the resort of millions of sea-birds, and abounds with green turtle. Twice before I had visited it, on each occasion spending several days and nights there, catching turtle and hundreds of huge *uga* (robber crabs), both of these creatures bringing good prices in Samoa—the natives competing keenly with the European residents, especially over the turtle, which are scarce in Samoa.

Little did I then imagine that this lonely spot in the South Pacific held a fortune in its bosom, and that I had been walking over it day after day. Had I possessed at that time the knowledge that came to me years afterwards I would not now be writing these "Notes from My South Sea Log." "Ulakita," as the natives call Sophia Island, had rich guano deposits, and

it fell to the lot of an American resident in Samoa to discover their value. But he was a good fellow and deserved his luck—which should have been mine.

We were, as I have said, becalmed. The day had been swelteringly hot, so hot that even a temporary awning I had on the after deck gave but little relief. Had we been anywhere on soundings I would have anchored the schooner and gone on shore in the boat and spent the night on the island, sleeping on the cool carpet of leaves under the big banian trees. But five miles was rather a long pull on such a day, so I gave up the idea. I must mention that I was bound from Samoa to Naura (Pleasant Island), a populous island situated 25 miles south of the Line, for a cargo of copra (dried coconut) and sharks' fins.

Just as the mate and I had finished our supper—it was then dark—one of our native hands reported that he saw a fire on Ulakita. Going on deck we saw it plainly, and in a few minutes it increased in size and brightness, and a dense volume of black smoke ascended through the windless atmosphere.

"It is right down at the water's edge," said the mate; "perhaps it is a signal from some shipwrecked people. But if so it is queer they did not light it long ago. We have been in sight of the island ever since daylight."

Taking our night glasses he went aloft to get a better view, and in a few minutes he called out to me excitedly to come up.

"It's a small craft on fire. She is either on shore or close in to the beach."

Going aloft I soon satisfied myself that the mate was correct, for every moment the flames became more brilliant, and we could see the black hull of the burning vessel silhouetted against the white beach of the little bay in which she lay.



Within ten minutes we had a boat provisioned, lowered and manned, and I started for the island, leaving the schooner in charge of the mate, who was to lower the second boat, and tow the vessel in close to the land and then anchor.

In half-an-hour I was close enough to the burning vessel to see that she was a cutter of about 20 tons. Her mast was still standing but aflame to the truck, the wire stays having kept the topmast erect, though it was near its collapse.

We approached as near as possible as the heat of the flames would permit, and hailed again and again, directing our voices to the shore, but nothing broke the silence of the night but the dull roar of the flames.

"Pull in for the beach, men," I said to my crew, "whoever was on board must have escaped to the shore long ago."

The beach was only a hundred yards distant, and it and the belt of palm and banian trees were clearly revealed, and in a few moments we saw a small boat, with one man in it, coming round a wooded point some little distance from where we had grounded our own boat. He was sculling vigorously and coming directly towards us, and we hailed each other simultaneously. He came up alongside, and, before he replied to my offer of assistance, he looked at the burning vessel and swore deeply. Then he turned to me:

"No, thank you. I saved all I could when I found the fire had got beyond me, tumbled it into the dinghy and sculled on shore—just round the point there—and then hurried back in the hope of getting another load, but it is too late."

"You look pretty well done up," I said, "and so I won't bother you with questions just now. Will you have a glass of grog or some beer—I have both here."

He drank off a pannikin full of bottled beer and then sat down in the stern sheets, and began a curious story. But he first ascertained from me where I was bound to, etc. Here is the yarn that he spun us.

"That cutter is the *Milly*, and belonged to me. My name is Kelly. I was chartered in Auckland to take a load of stores and provisions down to Flint Island. There were only four others on board besides myself—a white mate and three Kanaka A.B.s. The mate was a lazy, useless scamp, and when I got to Flint Island I kicked him ashore to shift for himself. The three Kanaka were Tongans, and only one of them was any good, and I had my hands pretty full, I can tell you, when I left Flint Island for the Bank's Group, where I was certain of picking up a full cargo on freight to Levuka. But I managed to get along till we reached Puka Puka (Danger Island), 700 miles to the westward. I ran in and let go close to the reef, as I wanted to buy some fresh provisions from the natives. Leaving one fellow on board to keep ship and see that the natives who might come on board did not steal anything, I went on shore with the other two. The moment the boat touched the beach my two beggars bolted from me and ran away into the bush, telling the natives I had been *Sauā* (cruel) to them. And I could not get them back—the swine."

"Couldn't you get a couple of men from Puka Puka?" I asked.

"Tried my hardest. No use. They were all too scared to come. And when at last, after buying all the provisions I wanted, I went on board, I found the cutter deserted—the other fellow had cleared out as well. So there was I left single-handed, with a big lump of a cutter to make a run of 1800 miles to Nitendi, in the Santa Cruz Group, and—hallo, there goes the last of the *Milly*."

As he was speaking there was a muffled report and then a sudden burst of flame from the after part of the burning vessel, which sank in a few seconds.

"Sounded and looked like a case of kerosene catching and going off, captain," I observed.

"Yes, either that or spirits. There were half-a-dozen tins of oil and a half-barrel of rum on board. Well, it has ended her."

We were all very silent for a few moments, for to watch a ship sink is hard, even to the mind of the roughest and most unsentimental sailor-man.

"Captain," I said, "let us go up on the bank and camp there until morning—if there is really nothing we can do for you until then."

He nodded: "Might as well make ourselves comfortable. My gear around the point is all right—nothing but the heavy dew to harm it. But what about your own ship?"

I told him of the orders given to the mate to tow in and anchor, and then sent back our own boat to help. Then I lit a fire, and the stranger and I had coffee and some biscuits and sardines, and during the rough meal he told me the rest of his story.

Leaving Puka Puka single-handed, he kept steadily on a due west course for the next seven days, heaving to at night but very seldom. Then he sighted Sophia Island and determined to anchor and spell for a few days. He did not know that it was uninhabited, but did know from hearsay that there was fresh water to be had and a safe anchorage somewhere on the lee side.

"I have been here two days," he said as he puffed away at his pipe, "and intended to stay for another two, even if a good breeze sprang up, for I was in want of a good rest. Yesterday, after having dinner on board, I came ashore, intending to climb to the top

of the island and then go all over it. I left everything safe and sound. There certainly was a little fire burning in the galley stove, but I slid to the door and I cannot imagine how the fire broke out. There was not a rat on board to my knowledge to cause the mischief, and I can only conclude that the fire started in some inexplicable way in the cabin or hold.

"Unfortunately for me, when I landed I struck right across the island to the weather side, where for two or three hours I was shooting plover and a sort of landrail. If I had kept to the lee side I could not have failed to have seen your vessel, and then I would have gone back to the cutter to get another oar and pull out to you, and the chances are that my little hooker would still be afloat, for that cursed fire must have started some hours before I saw it."

I remarked that we did not see it until after sunset.

"And just a little before, I had got back from the weather side of the island and was descending the hill when I first caught sight of my cutter and saw that she was on fire—smoke was pouring out of the hold through the open hatch—and presently I saw that the galley was alight.

"I jumped into the boat and sculled off, just in time to save most of everything of value in the cabin and pitch it into the boat. It was no use my trying to fight the fire—it had too firm a grip. And—well, that's all," and he threw out his hands with a gesture of indifference.

I walked with him to the place where he had landed his salvaged gear and assisted him to stow it in a more compact form, and then, as we returned to our camp to await daylight, gave him, in response to his inquiries, all the information I could about Ulakita.

"It's a mighty fine little place," he said musingly, "fresh water, turtle and fish, birds galore and coco-

nuts. A man could live here like a fighting cock, eh?"

I laughed: "He could indeed, even without Beauty by his side to share his loneliness."

He turned on me swiftly and gave me a searching glance, for I could see the glitter of his eyes in the darkness. Then he, too, laughed.

"Aye, aye, as you say. Now when is it that the sperm whalers touch here?"

"Not for some months yet. But only two of them, as far as I know—the *California* and the *Niger*. They usually lie off and on here for a day or two, on their way to the North-West, to cut firewood and let the crews have a run over the island. You see, Samoa is a bad place for a whaler's crew—so many of 'em desert there."

"Just so, just so. Well, I think I'll stay on here—hang it out until one of the blubber-hunters comes along, and then get her skipper to drop me somewhere up in the North-West."

I could not repress my astonishment.

"Why, man alive, what is the use of your sticking here by yourself for a couple of months—or longer! I'll be only too pleased to have you with us. We'll be back in Samoa in eight weeks. I thought you would know that you could have a passage with us—as a matter of course. I am bound to give you one whether I wanted to or not."

"I know that. But the fact is this. I have had such a knock-out that I would rather stay here on this quiet little island for a couple of months, or much longer, than go to Samoa. Here I can be quiet and settle down in content and live clean. If I went to Samoa I would just go around on a 'tear' and sling away every dollar I possess. No, I guess I'll stay here, and wait for one of the whalers. I can amuse

myself in no end of ways. I've saved my tool chest and my guns and ammunition, and if you will sell me some provisions I'll get along bully."

I saw that he was determined and not likely to reconsider his decision.

"Very well, captain. Do as you please. But I can't *sell* you provisions. I can give you some."

"I can pay."

"But you shall not. There is only one thing I must ask. You must give me a written statement that it was your own wish to remain here—else I would get talked about."

"Just as you like—certainly I will. Write out anything you like and I'll sign it."

\* \* \* \* \*

Just before daylight my boat returned, the schooner having anchored about a mile off the south-west point. I pressed my new acquaintance to come on board and have breakfast, and get what provisions I could spare him. To my surprise, he declined.

"No, I thank you, but I would rather not. I would just hate to put foot on the deck of another vessel so soon after losing my own. Guess I'm a sentimental mule in some things. No, I won't come on board, thank you; but if you will send me what provisions you can spare I'll be very grateful."

I stayed conversing with him for nearly half-an-hour longer, then a breeze sprang up and I bade him good-bye.

"Good-bye, captain. There is a breeze at last and it is going to hold out, so I won't come on shore again with the boat. If the calm kept up I would have come on shore and spent at least a day with you. But I must not lose more time than I can help."

We shook hands and parted, and I returned to the



schooner, and whilst the mate was putting a keg of beef, some tins of biscuits, a bag of flour, some coffee, tea and sugar, with a few bottles of spirits and some tobacco, into the boat, I wrote out a statement in the log-book for my new acquaintance to "sign and return."

An hour later the boat returned, and we lifted anchor and stood away on our course to Ocean Island.

"He's a queer sort of a chap," said the mate to me with a backward wave of his hand to the island, "wouldn't let the men even carry the provisions up the beach and put them under one of the big trees for shelter from the sun. Said it didn't matter, that he would see to them, and that he would not like to keep you waiting for the boat when there was such a fine breeze, and you were anxious to get away. And he asked me if I would accept this as a memento of our meeting."

"This" was an old Mexican gold piece with a hole drilled through it.

"He certainly is a curious sort of man. But I can quite understand his not liking to come on board. No doubt he feels the loss of his vessel very much. And he will be as happy as a sand-boy on Ulakita for the next seven or eight weeks—nothing to do but amuse himself with fishing and shooting. I would not mind changing places with him, if my wages as skipper of this loathly schooner were going on."

\* \* \* \* \*

For nearly five years I heard nothing definite of the man. When I returned to Samoa from Ocean Island I was almost immediately transferred as recruiter to another vessel—a big barque engaged in the labour trade between Apia and the Solomon Islands, and for nearly a year I was out of the world of hearing any news.

One day I found myself in Auckland, New Zealand, and made some inquiries from the shipping master there about the *Milly*. No vessel of that name or rig had ever come into or left the port!

Kelly of Ulakita was another "Daley" of Drummond's Island—the Daley of whom I have before written.

Then, nearly five years later, as I was telling this story of my *rencontre* with the eccentric Captain Kelly to an English merchant in Sydney, who had an agency in Singapore, he said:

"My agents in Manila and Singapore knew the man. He came to the Philippines in an American whaleship, accompanied by a Tahitian half-caste girl—his wife, *of course*. He had plenty of money. From Manila he went to Singapore, and after staying there for a month or two he bought a small schooner and went away—'somewhere.'"

"Somewhere!"

THE END.





